CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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IBC WORLD NEWS
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8 killed and 18 injured in terrorist explosion at mosque **P8**

Central govt releases major rural grants for states **P9**

P11 RCB's Andy Flower happy to acquire Venkatesh Iyer

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VV Rajesh becomes BJP's first Mayor in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Senior BJP leader VV Rajesh has scripted history by becoming the first-ever BJP Mayor of the Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation, ending nearly 40 years of Left Democratic Front (LDF) dominance in the city. The 49-year-old leader secured 51 votes in the mayoral election, while two votes were declared invalid. Large numbers of party workers gathered inside and outside the corporation hall to witness the oath-taking ceremony, reflecting the significance of the political shift.

The BJP emerged as the single largest party in the recent elections, winning 50 of the 101 seats. With the support of Independent councillor Pattoor Radhakrishnan from the Kannammoola ward, the party secured a simple majority. The LDF won 29 seats, while the Congress-led UDF secured 19. Elections in the Vizhinjam ward were postponed due to the death of an Independent candidate.

Rajesh, now serving his second term, represents the Kodunganoor ward. BJP leader GS Ashanath, elected from Karumam ward, is the party's Deputy Mayor candidate. Several senior BJP leaders, including State President Rajeev Chandrasekhar and Union Minister Suresh Gopi, attended the ceremony.

Rajesh said the administration would work to place Thiruvananthapuram among India's top three cities and assured cooperation with the opposition.

In a friendly gesture, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan congratulated Rajesh over the phone on Friday morning.

India condemns attacks on Hindus in B'desh

MEA said the violence "cannot be brushed aside" after back-to-back incidents in Rajbari and Mymensingh

NEW DELHI

India on Friday condemned the killing of a Hindu man in Bangladesh, expressing serious concern over a series of recent attacks targeting the minority Hindu community. Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said New Delhi was closely monitoring the situation and stressed that such incidents "cannot be brushed aside". He urged Bangladeshi authorities to conduct thorough investigations and ensure strict punishment for those responsible.

Jaiswal said the recurring violence against minorities in Bangladesh was alarming, and the killing of a Hindu youth highlighted the gravity of the situation. His remarks followed another incident in Rajbari district, where a Hindu man, identified as Amrit Mondal, died after being beaten by locals following allegations of extortion. Police said Mondal, who reportedly faced previous criminal charges, succumbed to injuries after being assaulted.

STOP KILLINGS OF HINDUS IN BANGLADESH
बांग्लादेश में हिंदुओं की हत्या बन्द करो
Stop Atrocities on Minorities in Bangladesh

This came shortly after the brutal lynching of 25-year-old Dipu Chandra Das in Mymensingh, where he was beaten, hanged, and later burned following accusations of blasphemy, triggering widespread outrage. Bangladesh police have made arrests in connection with the incidents and recovered weapons.

India has repeatedly urged Bangladesh to ensure the safety of minorities and uphold accountability. Bangladesh's interim government led by Muhammad Yunus condemned the violence, calling for communal harmony and promising stern action. The incidents have unfolded amid ongoing unrest in Bangladesh, heightening tensions and international concern.

Responding to queries on the return of Tarique Rahman, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India supports free, fair and inclusive elections in Bangladesh and that recent political developments there should be viewed in that context. He added that New Delhi is closely monitoring the situation in the neighbouring country.

> **"The unremitting hostility against minorities in Bangladesh is a matter of great concern. We condemn the recent killing of a Hindu youth in Bangladesh and expect that the perpetrators of the crime will be brought to justice."**
>
> — Randhir Jaiswal,
> MEA spokesperson

India raises concern over cancelled H-1B visa interviews

India on Friday said it flagged its concerns to the US over cancellation of pre-scheduled H1B visa interviews of large numbers of Indian applicants and that both sides are engaged on the issue. The interviews of thousands of H-1B visa applicants slated from the middle of this month in India have been abruptly postponed by several months to scrutinise their social media posts and online profiles. Some applicants whose visa appointments were scheduled last week received emails from US immigration authorities informing them that their interviews were being pushed back as late as May next year.

NIA team inspects cylinder blast site

MYSURU

An NIA team on Friday visited the site near Mysuru's iconic Amba Vilas Palace following a gas cylinder explosion on Thursday evening that claimed the life of a balloon vendor and injured four others. The victim, identified as Saleem from Uttar Pradesh, died in the incident when the cylinder he was using for his balloon business detonated in the busy tourist area.

MYSURU CYLINDER BLAST

As part of the probe, the team also interrogated two associates of the deceased who had been staying with him in Lashkar Mohalla, aiming to understand the sequence of events that led to the blast.

District in-charge minister H. C. Mahadevappa said that the cylinder did not contain helium; instead, the vendor reportedly used sodium hydroxide to generate gas.

Mahadevappa termed the blast an unfortunate accident, noting that Saleem was a seasonal vendor who had arrived in Mysuru about 15 days ago and was staying in a lodge with his family.

Regarding the NIA taking information on the incident, he said, "When such incidents occur, it is a normal process for the NIA to collect information from city Police as Mysuru is a major tourist destination. They are doing it. City Police are cooperating and providing all information" he said.

Photos have now emerged showing Saleem inside the Mysuru Palace premises. Police are investigating the circumstances of his presence—when he entered the palace and whether he was solely selling balloons or engaged in any other activity at the time.

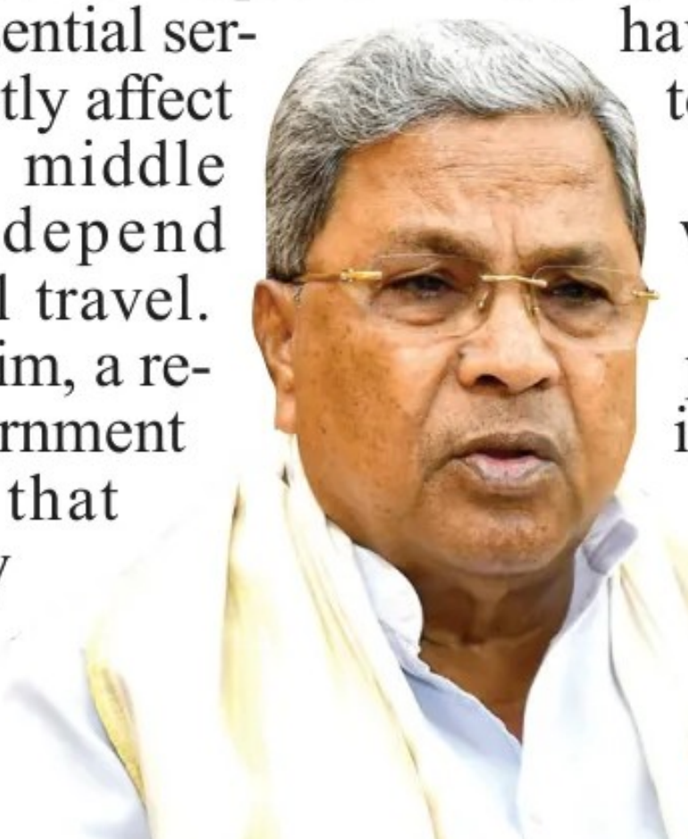
CM Siddaramaiah slammed the Centre over railway fare hike, saying it burdens people and urged BJP MPs to raise issue in Parliament

Central govt's rail fare hike is burdening people: CM

DAVANAGERE

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday strongly criticised the Union government, stating that the recent hike in railway ticket fares has imposed an additional financial burden on ordinary citizens. Speaking to reporters at the helipad in Davangere, he said the Centre should reconsider the decision and urged BJP MPs from the state to raise the issue in Parliament instead of remaining silent.

He remarked that frequent increases in essential service costs directly affect the poor and middle class, who depend heavily on rail travel. According to him, a responsible government must ensure that public-friendly policies are prioritised rather than moves that create hardship for people.



Responding to questions about developments within the Congress, Siddaramaiah confirmed that he will attend the Congress Working Committee meeting scheduled in New Delhi on December 27, stating that the party's central leadership had directed him to participate. However, when the media pressed him about alleged internal tussles over the chief minister's post, Siddaramaiah appeared visibly irritated and asked reporters whether they did not have any other issues to focus on.

The Chief Minister was in Davangere to attend a memorial programme organised by the family of veteran Congress leader Shamanur Shivashankarappa.

Updated train fare

- For Ordinary class (beyond 215 km), the fare will go up by 1 paise per km
- For Mail/Express non-AC, the fare has been increased by 2 paise per km
- For AC classes, the fares have gone up by 2 paise per km. For example, a passenger travelling 500 km in a non-AC coach will pay only ₹10 extra.

Why the fare hike?

In a statement, the railways said it has expanded its network and operations significantly over the last decade and thus requires greater manpower to cater to a higher level of operations and improved.

QUICK READ

Chitradurga accident: Death toll rises to 7 as driver succumbs to injuries

HUBBALLI: The death toll in the Chitradurga accident increased to seven after the bus driver, Mohammed Rafique, succumbed to his injuries on Friday. Police said Rafique, who was severely injured in the collision that occurred in the early hours of Thursday, had been rushed to the Karnataka Institute of Medical Sciences in Hubballi for treatment. Despite undergoing emergency surgery he could not survive. ➔ *More on page 4*

20-year-old Indian student shot dead near Toronto University

TORONTO: A 20-year-old Indian doctoral student, identified as Shivank Avasthi, was shot dead near the University of Toronto Scarborough campus, prompting a homicide investigation by Toronto Police. In a statement, Toronto Police Service said the shooting occurred on Tuesday. Officers were called to the Highland Creek Trail and Old Kingston Road area around 3:30 pm after reports of an injured person.

BJP-JDS alliance excludes local body elections: HD Devegowda

BENGALURU

Former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda said that the BJP-JDS alliance in Karnataka applies only to Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections, and not to local body polls. Speaking at JDS Bhavan, he said the party will hold meetings on January 18 in Bengaluru and January 23 in Hassan to finalize its strategy.

In local elections, JDS intends to contest independently, while for Assembly and Parliamentary elections, it will continue its collaboration with the NDA. Preliminary discussions indicate that in the Legislative Council's four-seat contest, one seat would go to JDS and three to BJP.

Meanwhile, BJP state president B.Y. Vijayendra addressed party workers, suggesting that given the current scenario, Assembly elections could be held before 2028. He emphasized that BJP should come to power on its own strength, calling for party workers to be committed to this goal. Vijayendra, reflecting on his state tours, said he had understood the ground realities and urged members to prepare for BJP's independent rise to power.

With 130–140 seats projected, BJP is confident of forming the government without alliances, indirectly signaling a rejection of any coalition at the state level. Deve Gowda subtly responded to Vijayendra's remarks, noting the young leader's enthusiasm and comparing him to a "young star" in his energy and approach.

MLA Byrati Basavaraj secures interim bail

BENGALURU

In a significant development in the Biklu Shiva murder case, former minister Byrati Basavaraj, who was facing the threat of arrest, has been granted interim anticipatory bail by the Karnataka High Court. The High Court considered the submissions and granted interim relief while also instructing Basavaraj to fully cooperate with the ongoing investigation. The court has issued notices to CID police for any objections and adjourned the matter for further hearing on January 6.

HONOURING YOUNG ACHIEVERS

President Murmu confers PM Rashtriya Bal Puraskar

NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday conferred the prestigious Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar on children for their outstanding achievements in fields including bravery, social service, environment, sports, art and culture, and science and technology, at a ceremony held in the national capital.

सम्मान समारोह
प्रधानमंत्री राष्ट्रीय बाल पुरस्कार 2025
श्रीमती द्रौपदी मुर्मु

Congratulating the award recipients, the President said the children have brought immense pride to their families, communities and the nation. She expressed confidence that the honours would inspire children across the country to pursue excellence and uphold high ideals. The awards, she said, recognise not only talent but also courage, compassion and a spirit of service.

Recalling history, President Murmu spoke about Guru Gobind Singh Ji and the supreme sacrifices made by his four sons nearly 320 years ago in the fight for truth and justice. She noted that the bravery of the two youngest Sahibzadas continues to be honoured and respected in India and abroad, serving as a timeless inspiration for future generations.

The President observed that the greatness of a nation is reflected in children who are guided by patriotism and strong values. She appreciated the diverse achievements of the awardees, ranging from innovation and environmental work to sports and cultural excellence. Citing examples, she mentioned seven-year-old chess prodigy Vaka Lakshmi Pragnika, brave children Ajay Raj and Mohammed Sidan P who saved lives, and young heroes Vyoma Priya and Kamlesh Kumar who sacrificed their lives while rescuing others.

She also praised Shravan Singh for supporting soldiers during Operation Sindoor, differently-abled sportsperson Shivani Hosuru Uppara for her achievements despite challenges, and young cricketer Vaibhav Suryavanshi for his record-breaking performances. President Murmu expressed confidence that such brave and talented children will help build a bright future for India.

BYV predicts possible midterm polls in Karnataka

BENGALURU

Karnataka BJP President B.Y. Vijayendra claimed that there could be possibility of midterm elections in the state, citing ongoing internal rifts within the ruling Congress government. Speaking after paying floral tributes during the Veer Balak Diwas programme at the party's state office in Bengaluru, he expressed confidence that the BJP would return to power with a comfortable majority whenever elections are announced.

Vijayendra said that whether polls are held as scheduled in 2028 or earlier, the BJP is prepared and will likely win between 130 and 140 seats independently. He claimed that growing dissatisfaction among the public and increasing competition within the Congress for the Chief Minister's post could lead to political instability. Referring to recent town panchayat election results, he said the BJP had performed beyond expectations and secured major victories in several places, including Bajpe, Kinnigoli, Manki and Bashettihalli.

QUICK READ

Nurse murder case shocks city, colleague arrested

Bengaluru

A 39-year-old woman was found murdered at her home in Pragathipuram, K S Layout, police said. The victim, Mamata, worked as a staff nurse at Jayadeva Heart Hospital and lived with a friend who was away that night. Police registered a case and began investigation. Officers arrested Sudhakar, a young colleague from the same hospital. Investigators said the two had been in a relationship for about a year. After Sudhakar became engaged elsewhere, Mamata reportedly asked him to marry her. Police allege he visited her house on December 24 and killed her before fleeing the police said.

Technician arrested for secretly filming female staff

Bengaluru

Police arrested a junior technician for secretly recording female hospital staff changing clothes inside an operation theatre dressing room. The incident happened at a hospital in Nagarabavi Phase Two. Staff noticed a mobile phone placed to capture video and immediately alerted authorities. The accused, a 23-year-old technician from West Bengal, worked at the hospital for one year. Based on a complaint by the hospital director, Annapoorneshwari Nagar police registered a case. The technician was taken into custody and later sent to judicial remand. Police said action taken to protect privacy.

Vande Bharat express to halt at Hindupur

Bengaluru

South Western Railway will run a trial stoppage for the Kacheguda–Yesvantpur Vande Bharat Express at Hindupur station starting December 27. Train No. 20703 will arrive at 12:08 p.m. and depart at 12:10 p.m., while the return train No. 20704 will halt from 3:48 p.m. to 3:50 p.m. The brief two-minute stop aims to improve rail connectivity and provide faster, more convenient travel for passengers in the Hindupur region. Officials hope the trial will make commuting easier and encourage more travelers to use the Vande Bharat service for daily and long-distance journeys.

Mysuru blast: HM G. Parameshwar orders for a detailed investigation

Dr. G Parameshwar said officials will investigate the helium cylinder's purchase, source, and safety compliance before taking necessary action

BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister Dr. G. Parameshwar has directed officials to conduct a detailed investigation and submit a report on the helium cylinder explosion that occurred near the Mysore Palace on Thursday night.

Speaking at his home office, the Home Minister said the incident exposed a serious lack of regulation over small vendors operating in busy tourist areas. He noted that a balloon seller from Lucknow lost his life in the blast and stressed the need for stricter monitoring, especially as large numbers of tourists visit the city.

Dr. Parameshwar said officials have been asked to work with the Tourism Department to examine how the seller obtained the helium cylinder, where it was purchased, and whether safety rules were followed. He said the matter would be reviewed carefully and necessary action would be taken based on the findings.

Referring to other matters, the Minister clarified that he would not attend the Congress Working Committee meeting in Delhi, as he is not a member. He also said a meeting with senior police officers has been scheduled on Sunday to review security arrangements for New Year celebrations.

The explosion occurred around 8.30 pm on Christmas Day near the Jayamartanda Gate. Six people were injured, with two reported to be in critical condition. Police have seized materials from the spot and examined nearby CCTV footage. District in-charge Minister Dr. H.C. Mahadevappa.

Eggs are safe, no carcinogens found: Gundurao

BENGALURU

Health Minister Dinesh Gundurao assured the public that eggs in Karnataka are safe for consumption and do not contain any carcinogenic elements.

Speaking in the district, Gundurao said samples of eggs were collected from multiple districts and tested in laboratories. "The reports have confirmed that there are no carcinogenic substances in the eggs. They are safe to eat. The FSSAI has also confirmed there is no problem. People need not worry," he added.

The minister also addressed concerns about community health services. He said doctors would be redistributed based on patient needs, with specialists being moved from low-demand areas and replaced by two MBBS doctors at each center. "No community health center will be closed. After shifting specialist doctors, two MBBS doctors will be appointed to ensure continued care. All centers will continue providing 24-hour services," he clarified.

Gundurao emphasized that the government is committed to both public health safety and uninterrupted healthcare access, ensuring residents receive timely medical attention while maintaining trust in food safety standards.

The announcement comes amid growing public concern over food safety and local healthcare services. With the official test results now released, residents can consume eggs confidently while the state continues efforts to strengthen healthcare accessibility across districts.

BIAL extended the 10-minute limit after driver complaints, aiming to ease congestion and offer passengers more pick-up flexibility

BIAL extends free pickup time for taxis by five minutes

BENGALURU

Following criticism from cab operators, Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) has extended the free parking duration at Terminal 1 arrivals at Kempegowda International Airport. The move, effective from December 26, increases the complimentary waiting time from 10 minutes to 15 minutes at pick-up points P3 and P4.

The new regulations, initially introduced on December 13, had drawn complaints from drivers who said the 10-minute limit was insufficient for smooth passenger pick-ups. In response, BIAL said the extension aims to provide greater flexibility for passengers and their families, while also easing traffic congestion at the busy terminal.

"To make passenger movement more convenient, we have also deployed shuttles every seven minutes, along with six cars and ten buggies to ferry passengers between P3 and P4," a BIAL spokesperson said. "This will ensure a faster and assisted experience for travelers arriving at the airport."

Under the revised policy, commercial vehicles can now wait free of charge for up to 15 minutes. Beyond this period, cab operators will be charged ₹100 for the first 30 minutes and ₹50 for every additional hour.

The airport authority stressed that these changes are part of its ongoing efforts to improve passenger experience while managing traffic efficiently. Cab operators welcomed the move but said they will continue to monitor the new system to ensure it meets operational needs.

The adjustment comes at a time when Bengaluru airport sees a high volume of arrivals daily, and managing pick-up traffic has been a challenge. BIAL hopes the extended free period and shuttle services will provide a smoother, hassle-free experience for both passengers and drivers.

City parks and lakes shut for New Year

BENGALURU

The Bengaluru Central Municipal Corporation has announced temporary restrictions on public entry to all its parks and lakes on New Year's Eve. The decision was taken as a safety step ahead of large crowds expected to gather across the city to welcome 2026.

According to an official media release, entry to parks and lakes under the corporation will be closed after 6.00 pm on Wednesday, December 31, 2025. The order was issued by the Additional Commissioner of Development, Daljit Kumar, to prevent accidents, overcrowding, and any disturbance to public peace during celebrations.

Officials said that New Year night usually sees heavy footfall at open public spaces, which can make crowd control difficult. Limiting access, they said, will help police and civic teams manage the situation better and ensure safety for everyone. Emergency services and security staff will remain alert across the city during the night. The civic body has urged residents to celebrate responsibly and follow rules set by authorities.

Lawmakers urged to recast safeguards for succession

BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has drawn attention to what it described as an unintended omission in the Hindu Succession Act and has called upon the central government to revisit and recast the law to clearly safeguard the inheritance rights of widows and mothers.

A division bench of Justices R Devdas and B Muralidhara Pai made the observation while deciding a property dispute involving the widow and children of a man who died in 2008. The case concerned the division of ancestral property and required interpretation of Section 6 of the Hindu Succession Act, which was amended in 2005.

The Court noted that prior to the amendment, the law explicitly recognised widows and mothers as beneficiaries during a notional partition of joint family property. However, the amended provision, while granting daughters equal coparcenary rights, does not expressly refer to widows and mothers in the same context. This, the Court said, has created ambiguity in determining their shares.

The judges clarified that there was no indication that Parliament intended to dilute or take away the rights of widows or mothers.

Hotels, bars to close by 1 am on New Year's eve

BENGALURU

As Bengaluru gears up to welcome the New Year, police have issued strict guidelines for hotels, bars, and pubs to ensure a safe celebration. A meeting was held today with establishment owners under the leadership of Bengaluru Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar, who issued 30 key instructions covering crowd control, safety, and operational rules.

The Commissioner clarified that all bars, pubs, and hotels in the city limits must close by 1 am. Owners were instructed to manage crowds, check age limits, and ensure orderly entry and exit. Installation of CCTV cameras, adherence to fire safety norms, proper parking, and prohibition of alcohol consumption by staff were emphasized. Noise control and the safety of women were also highlighted as top priorities.

Commissioner Kumar stressed that provocative songs, rave parties, illegal gatherings, firecrackers, and weapons are strictly prohibited. Separate arrangements should be made for families and friend groups to maintain decorum. Establishments were also directed to maintain proper liquor stock records and inform police of their event plans in advance.

"We expect all hotel, pub, and bar owners to cooperate for a safe and responsible New Year celebration," Commissioner Kumar said. The instructions aim to prevent overcrowding, ensure emergency preparedness, and promote a festive yet secure environment across the city.

Despite requests from establishments for extended hours, the Commissioner stood firm on the 1 am closure to prioritize safety. Police will monitor adherence and assist in managing large crowds, especially in popular areas like MG Road, where youth gather to celebrate. The focus is on a joyful and responsible start to 2026 for Bengaluru residents and visitors.

K'taka HC issues key judgments in 2025

BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court passed several important orders in 2025 covering family disputes, divorce cases, road accidents, and other matters that drew public attention this year. The rulings focused on responsibility, fairness, and social balance while delivering justice.

In family dispute cases, the court stressed that marriage is not a child's game. Judges said couples must try to live together harmoniously, especially for the sake of children. A husband's plea for divorce without valid reasons was dismissed, with the court warning that broken families can harm a child's education and future.

In another case, the court ruled that a divorced wife cannot remain permanently dependent on her husband. She was advised to seek employment within six months.

In 2025, the Karnataka High Court delivered impactful rulings on family disputes, divorce, accidents and social issues, reinforcing responsibility, fairness, compassion, and justice statewide.

The court also upheld a divorce granted to a husband where the wife denied marital relations and filed false dowry complaints soon after marriage. Reaffirming Hindu law, the court said marriage is a sacred bond and dismissed a divorce plea filed without proof of harassment.

In accident cases, the court ordered compensation for families even when railway tickets were missing. It also said lack of a driving license alone cannot decide accident blame.

Other key orders included special exam arrangements for a pregnant candidate, installing Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's portraits in courts, and granting parole to a murder convict to support reform.

These judgments highlight the court's role in shaping society, protecting rights, and promoting responsibility. Legal experts said such orders send clear messages on accountability, compassion, and justice, influencing future cases and public confidence in the judicial system across Karnataka this year Today.

BMIC land acquisition scrapped

BENGALURU

Commuters are advised against using NICE Road to enter highway as it is currently experiencing heavy congestion. The other way: Consider using Kanakapura Road or Kunigal-Magadi Road where possible to bypass main expressway toll.BENGALURU The Karnataka High Court has set aside a land acquisition notification issued for the Bengaluru–Mysuru Infrastructure Corridor (BMIC) project after noting that the landowner had not been awarded compensation for nearly 17 years.

The case related to a one-acre parcel of land located in Thalaghattapura in Bengaluru South. The preliminary notification to acquire the land was issued in 2006, followed by a final notification in 2008. However, the acquiring authorities neither passed an award determining compensation nor took possession of the land during this prolonged period. In view of the prolonged inaction and absence of any ongoing public purpose, the High Court quashed the acquisition notification, restoring ownership rights to the landowner and reiterating that acquisition proceedings must be completed within a reasonable time frame.

BENGALURU PUBLIC HOTLINE

Commissioner holds phone-in program to address complaints

BENGALURU

The Bengaluru North Municipal Corporation Commissioner, Pommala Sunil Kumar, held an early morning phone-in program to hear public complaints and ensure quick action. The program was conducted at 7 am at the Batarayanapura Control Room on Amruthahalli Main Road.

The phone-in initiative began on September 26 and has shown positive results over the past 13 weeks. During this

period, the corporation received 730 complaints from residents. Of these, action has already been taken on 481 complaints. Another 35 complaints were outside the corporation's limits and were forwarded to other departments, while officials were directed to resolve the remaining 185 complaints at the earliest.

During today's session, the Commissioner received 27 calls and recorded 42 complaints. Each issue was reviewed on the spot, and instructions were issued to concerned officers for immediate follow-up.

Road maintenance emerged as a major concern, with 20 complaints related to potholes and damaged roads. The Commissioner said pothole-filling work is underway day and night and directed officials to complete repairs on priority while maintaining quality for smooth traffic movement.

Six complaints related to waste collection were also received. Officers were instructed to ensure timely garbage collection in all wards. Three complaints about dangerous trees and hanging branches were addressed, with forest officials asked to act immediately. Concerns over sewage flowing into Narasipur and Doddammasandra lakes were raised. The Commissioner ordered strict action to prevent pollution and illegal construction near lake buffer zones. He also directed officials to examine a request for installing a gate at a cemetery in Shivanahalli.

HELIUM GAS CYLINDER EXPLOSION: TOLL RISES TO TWO

Social Welfare and District-In-Charge Minister Dr H.C.Mahadevappa enquiring health of a person at KR Hospital who was injured in the Helium gas cylinder blast in Mysuru on Friday.

Wailing families outside the KR Hospital in Mysuru on Friday where the victims of Helium gas cylinder blast are undergoing treatment.

MYSURU

The death toll in the helium Gas cylinder explosion that occurred at Jaya Marthanda Gate of the famous Mysuru Palace on Thursday night, reached two with a critically injured woman succumbed to her injuries at Krishna Rajendra Hospital in Mysuru on Friday.

She has been identified as Manjula, a flower vendor from Nanjangud in Mysuru district, who came to the city to see the flower show and the palace Illumination with her relatives and friends. She was very critical at the time of shifting her to the hospital but the doctors tried their best to save her. But she breathed her last on Friday afternoon.

Meanwhile, the condition of another woman was also said to be critical and she is being admitted to JSS Hospital. The doctors are making all efforts to save her. Both these women had suffered heavy injuries since they were walking past the bi-cycle on which the helium gas cylinder was kept to fill up the balloons. The impact of the explosion caused them heavy injuries on the head and other parts of the city.

IDENTIFY ESTABLISHED:

The identity of the balloon vendor has been established as Saleem from Uttar Pradesh who came to Mysuru along with his two friends to sell the balloon. He died on the spot as the explosion ripped off the body completely. The body parts were strewn around the place which indicated the severity of the incident. The cops have informed the family members of Saleem and they are expected to reach the city soon to claim the mortal remains.

MINISTER VISITED

Social Welfare and District-In-Charge Minister Dr H.C.Mahadevappa visited the KR Hospital to see meet the victims of the explosion. He spoke to the victims and their family members. The minister also collected details from the doctors on the condition of the injured persons.

Later, while talking to reporters, the minister termed that Helium gas cylinder Explosion as an 'unfortunate' and 'unexpected' accident, which claimed two lives and left one in critical condition. The blast occurred when the vendor, identified as Saleem, was filling the balloons, and all of a sudden the helium gas cylinder exploded. "This is an accidental incident, an unexpected event. The balloon exploded due to heat, and in that explosion, one person lost his life on the spot and another succumbed to her injuries in hospital.

The deceased has been identified Saleem, a migrant worker from Uttar Pradesh who was engaged in seasonal business. Among the injured, Ranju Gowda, also known as Lakshmi Gowda, a resident of Bengaluru who drives an auto in Mandya, and Rani have suffered serious injuries to their hands and legs. "Two people are critical, while one person is safe and out of danger,"

Manjula, a flower vendor from Nanjangud town, who succumbed to her injuries in KR Hospital in Mysuru on Friday.

Dr. Mahadeppa explained that the victim was a seasonal trader who prepare and sell items like ice candy and balloons, particularly during tourist seasons. Such traders come from different states, including Uttar Pradesh, to Mysuru. More than a thousand people are involved in seasonal business here. The explosion happened while the victim was filling the air to the balloons from the cylinder.

Referring to the large tourist presence in Mysuru due to Christmas celebrations, the Minister said a major disaster was narrowly averted. Yesterday being Christmas, many tourists had come to the city. Luckily, a major mishap was avoided, but unfortunately, two lives were. Life is very valuable.

Addressing concerns about accountability and regulation of migrant seasonal traders, the minister admitted the challenges and opined that there is a need to streamline who comes and who goes. These are poor people earning their livelihood. The government has already listed more than a thousand seasonal traders, and they will work on maintaining a detailed record.

On the use of gas for balloon filling, the Minister said that helium is dangerous and noted that if substances like hydrogen, sodium, or sodium hydroxide (caustic soda) are used improperly, the risk of explosion increases significantly. Such incidents are lessons for them. Next time, they will take more precautions.

About a possible ban on using helium in public places, Dr. Mahadeppa said the government would study the matter in detail. "We cannot allow the use of dangerous chemical substances in public places. After a detailed study, necessary steps will be taken to prevent such incidents," he assured.

Regarding medical treatment, the Minister said the injured are receiving care at KR Hospital and JSS Hospital. "Major operations have been performed. Our doctors are efficient and experienced," he said, reiterating that Lakshmi remain in critical condition.

On the source of the gas, he clarified that the traders prepared it themselves by mixing chemicals, and ruled out any immediate involvement of investigative agencies but said cooperation would be extended if required. "As of now, this is purely an accidental and rare incident. It is unfortunate, and we will definitely be more cautious in the future," he concluded.

WHY HELIUM IS USED IN BALLOONS?

Helium is used in balloons because it's a light, inert gas that's much less dense than air, making balloons float, and crucially, it's non-flammable, making it much safer than its lighter alternative, hydrogen, which can explode. Its inert nature (noble gas) means it won't react or burn, ensuring safety for parties, weather forecasting, and other applications where a lifting gas is needed without fire risk.

- **Low Density:** Helium is the second lightest element, so it provides strong buoyancy, allowing balloons to rise easily.
- **Non-Flammable:** Unlike hydrogen, helium won't ignite or explode when exposed to air, making it the safer choice for everyday use.
- **Inert:** As a noble gas, it's chemically unreactive, which is vital for scientific instruments on weather balloons and prevents reactions with balloon materials.

Lodge raided; Two detained

Meanwhile, the city cops raided a lodge in which the deceased Saleem along with two others were staying in last few weeks. A police team swung into action and swooped on the lodge to conduct the search. Two of his accomplice were picked up for questioning after some private TV channels created the conspiracy theory. The identity of the duo has not been disclosed yet. The body of Saleem has been kept in the KR Hospital mortuary and it would be handed over to the family members after they arrive in Mysuru.

Tour turns tragedy

A family of four members from Bengaluru had come to Mysuru on Thursday. After visiting the Chamundi Hill in the morning, they had gone to enjoy the flower slow inside the palace premises and the palace illumination. As they were walking past the cycle on which the Helium gas cylinder had been placed, a sudden explosion occurred killing the vendor on the spot. While his wife, Lakshmi received severe injuries on the backside of face and left arm, his daughter suffered minor injuries and his sister also sustained injuries on the limb. While his daughter and sister are said to be out of danger, his wife is said to be in a critical condition and undergoing treatment at JSS Hospital. "Everything happened in a second and I am still not come out of the shock", he added.

Savior

A autorickshw driver was passing on that road when the blast occurred. The cops who were present on the spot, without waiting for the arrival of the ambulances, stopped the vehicles and arranged for the immediate shifting of the injured to the nearby hospital.

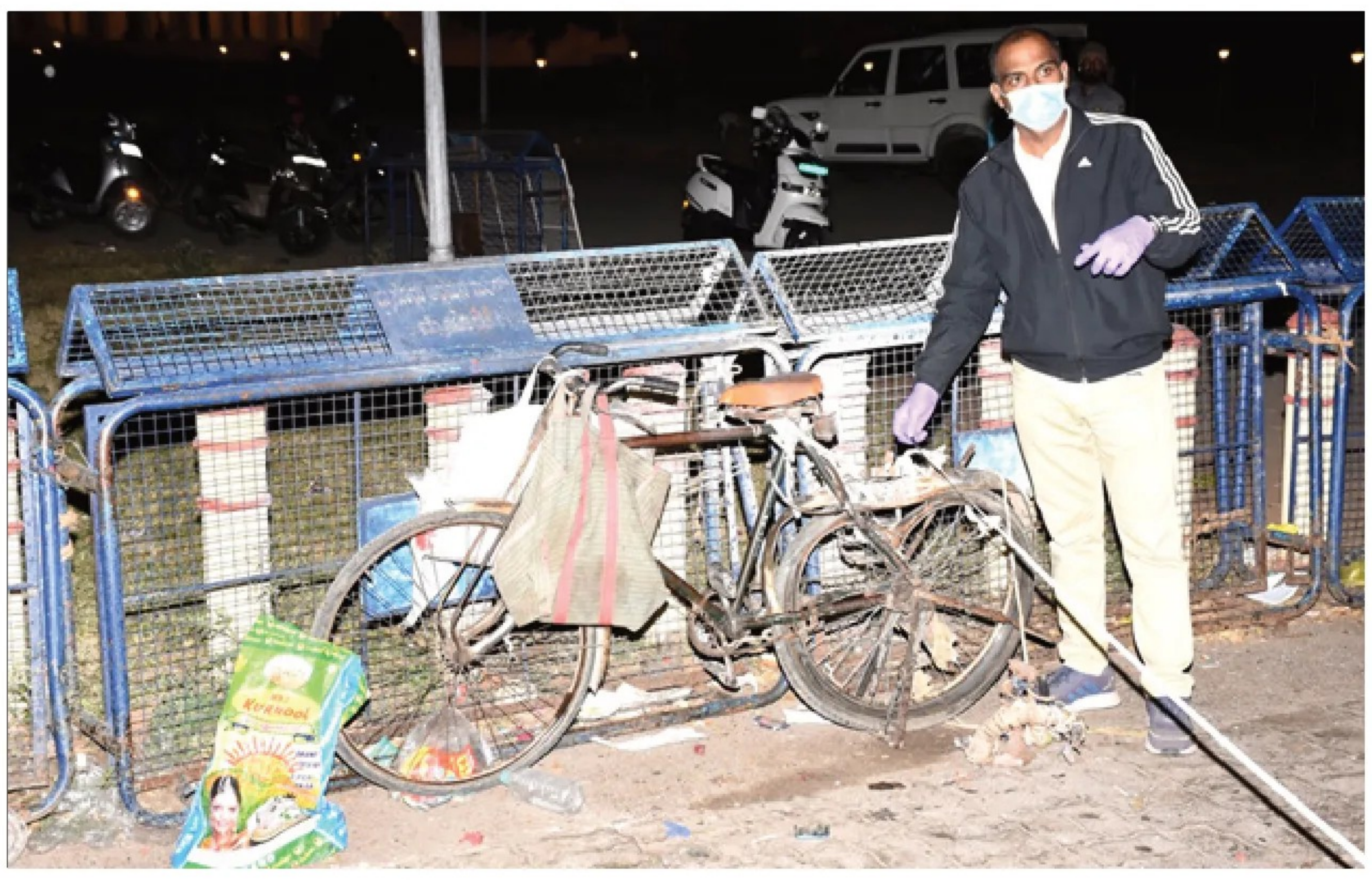
The autorickshaw driver carried the critically injured Lakshmi and her daughter in his vehicle and shifted them to JSS Hospital. Due to the shock, the lady was in semi-conscious state and not talking. Since the cops had alerted the hospital authorities, the staff was ready to start immediate treatment of the blast victims.

Force deployed

The police have deployed additional force at Jayamarthanda Gate to prevent any person or vehicle from stopping near the gate. The blast site has been sealed off and waiting for the arrival of the investigation team to ascertain the real cause for the explosion. The Jayamarthanda Gate is situated on Bengaluru-Nilgiri National Highway and tourists stop at this gate to click the picture of the palace in morning and evening. The gate would remain closed except during the arrival of Dasara elephants and other important occasions.

The FSL experts have collected the samples of the exploded items for further tests. They wanted to ascertain whether the blast occurred due to Helium gas cylinder explosion or for some other reasons.

PALACE TRAGEDY AFTERMATH



The mangled remains of a balloon seller's bicycle lie outside the Mysuru Palace, bearing silent testimony to the impact of the incident at the busy tourist spot.
▸ CH PHOTO

Be alert near educational institutions about the sale of drugs: Addl SP

MYSURU

As the network of narcotic drugs is expanding day by day, there is a need to create awareness among the general public as well as students about the harmful effects caused by drug consumption, said Additional Superintendent of Police Malik.

He was speaking while presiding over the district-level committee meeting of the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) held today at the Deputy Commissioner's Office conference hall.

He said awareness programmes on drugs should be conducted in schools and colleges. Since there is a higher possibility of drug usage at places where students work, special attention should be given to such places and awareness should be created among them. Along with installing CCTV cameras in schools and colleges, teachers should closely monitor areas identified as grey zones.

The Additional SP said banners containing information about the harmful effects of drugs should be installed near schools, colleges, and public places. Awareness programmes should be conducted for students, and officials should take strict action to prohibit the use of narcotic substances. If any information is received regarding drug trafficking or the operation of drug networks, it should be immediately shared with the police. Cooperation with the police and assisting in investigations is appropriate.

Temple to distribute 2,00,000 laddus to devotees on January 1

MYSURU

To welcome the New Year 2026, Tirupati-style laddu prasada will be distributed at Sri Yoganarasimha Swamy Temple, located in Vijayanagar, Mysuru. A total of 2 lakh laddus will be distributed on this occasion.

Sharing this information with media, Sri Bhashyam Swamiji, as in previous years, Tirupati-style laddus will be distributed on January 1 this year as well. The distribution will take place from 4:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. For the past 10 days, the laddu preparation work has been going on at a brisk pace. The laddus are being prepared by 100 experienced cooks. This year, 10,000 laddus weighing 2 kg each and 2 lakh laddus weighing 150 grams each have been prepared.

The making of laddu is going on in full swing at Sri Yoganarasimha Swamy Temple in Mysuru on Friday.

For the preparation of the laddus, the following ingredients have been used: 100 quintals of gram flour, 200 quintals of sugar, 10,000 litres of edible oil, 500 kg of cashew nuts, 500 kg of raisins, 250 kg of almonds, 1,000 kg of diamond sugar, 2,000 kg of boora sugar, 50 kg of pistachios, 50 kg of cardamom, 50 kg of nutmeg and mace, 50 kg of edible camphor, and 200 kg of cloves, he detailed.

The seer said the distribution of Laddu was started in 1993 November when Kannada actor, Dr Raj Kumar visited the temple and wished that the Tirupati-style laddus be distributed to the devotees. The very next year, in 1994, the distribution of Tirupati-styled Laddus began with just 1,000 laddus prepared by four professional laddu makers from Tirupati. Subsequently, it was increased to 2,000, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000, 50,000, one lakh and now two lakh. The laddus will be distributed to all devotees without any discrimination.

On January 1, special decorations will be performed for Sri Yoganarasimha Swamy, including the Sahasranama archana with golden flowers, and an Ekadasha Prakara Utsava of the processional deity will be held. Devotees will be served puliyogare prasada along with laddus.

Around 50 quintals of puliyogare will be prepared for distribution, Swamiji added.

Present at the press conference were Temple Administrative Officer Srinivas, Govindaraju, son-in-law of Dr. Rajkumar, and his wife Lakshmi.

Power Interruption in Mysuru & surrounding areas

MYSURU

Mysuru residents have been informed of scheduled power supply disruptions due to underground cable installation and maintenance work across multiple areas. On December 27, from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, areas including Brindavan 1st and 2nd Stage and nearby localities will experience outages under the V.V. Mohalla Sub-Division of Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation Limited (CESC). Additionally, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Ramanuja Road, Basaveshwara Road 1st to 14th Cross, Narayana Shastri Road 1st to 6th Cross, Madhwachar Road, and surrounding areas will also be affected.

On December 28, power will be disrupted from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM in industrial and commercial zones, including Koorgalli Industrial Area, Hootagalli Industrial Area, Wipro, L&T, RPG Cables, Jimco, and nearby areas. On December 29, outages from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM will affect Alanahalli Village, Netaji Nagar, KSRTC Layout, Doctor Layout, and surrounding localities, as well as Srirampura 2nd Stage, Jayanagar 1st to 20th Cross, and parts of Kuvempu Nagar.

On December 30, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM, several residential zones, including Tonachikoppalu, Saraswathipuram 1st to 4th Main Road, Kuvempunagar, Vivekananda Nagar, Kandaya Nagar, and surrounding localities, will experience disruptions. Residents are advised to plan accordingly and cooperate during maintenance work to ensure safe and uninterrupted restoration of electricity supply.

QUICK READ

Christmas Celebrated with Devotion and Communal Harmony

Anekal

The Christian community in Anekal celebrated Christmas with great enthusiasm, devotion, and a spirit of brotherhood. The festive celebrations were held at the historic St. Joseph's Church, which was beautifully decorated and witnessed a large turnout of devotees from across the town and surrounding areas. From early morning, the church premises were filled with worshippers attending special Christmas prayers. The atmosphere was marked by hymns, prayers, and messages of peace and goodwill. A major attraction during the celebrations was the joyful presence of Santa Claus, with small children eagerly playing, posing for photographs, and receiving greetings, which added colour and cheer to the festive occasion.

Cyber Fraudsters Hack Mobile Number

Kanakapura

In a disturbing case of cybercrime reported from Kanakapura, fraudsters hacked a victim's mobile number and transferred ₹1.50 lakh from his bank account in stages. The incident falls under the jurisdiction of the Satanur Police Station and has raised serious concerns about the growing misuse of fake digital links to dupe unsuspecting citizens. The victim has been identified as Gangadhar, a resident of Kanchanahalli village in Satanur hobli. According to the complaint, cyber fraudsters sent a fake link posing as an "RTO e-challan app" to Gangadhar's WhatsApp number. Believing it to be an official communication related to a traffic fine, he clicked on the link. Soon after clicking the link, Gangadhar's mobile phone was compromised.

Two-Year-Old Leopard Caught After Triggering Panic

Ramanagara

Relief returned to residents of Madapura village in Ramanagara after a two-year-old male leopard, which had created panic in the area, was successfully captured by the forest department using a cage. The leopard had been frequently sighted in and around the village, which lies close to the Ramadevara hill range, leading to growing fear among villagers. According to officials, the leopard menace had intensified in recent weeks, with the animal venturing into residential areas at night in search of food. Villagers reported multiple incidents in which leopards attacked and carried away sheep, goats, calves, chickens, and even domestic dogs from cattle sheds and backyards.

CM Announces ₹5 Lakh Compensation for Families of Four Youths

CM ordered immediate compensation after four youths died in a devastating road accident near Ajjawara Gate

CHIKKABALLAPUR

In a tragic incident that has plunged Ajjawara village into deep mourning, Siddaramaiah, the Chief Minister of Karnataka, has directed officials to provide compensation of ₹5 lakh each to the families of four youths who lost their lives in a horrific road accident near Ajjawara Gate in Chikkaballapur taluk. The Chief Minister also instructed the concerned departments to ensure the immediate disbursal of the compensation amount without delay. The fatal accident occurred when a tipper lorry rammed into a motorcycle carrying four youths near Ajjawara Gate. Due to the severity of the collision, all four youths died on the spot. The deceased have been identified as Manoj, Narasimha Murthy, Nandish, and Arun, all residents of Ajjawara village. Reports indicate that the four were travelling together on a single motorcycle when the accident took place, resulting in a devastating impact.

The incident was brought to the notice of the Chief Minister by Pradeep Eshwar, the Congress MLA from the Chikkaballapura constituency. Following his request for financial assistance to the bereaved families, the Chief Minister promptly announced the compensation, expressing deep sorrow over the loss of young lives.

The tragedy has been particularly heartbreaking for the family of Narasimha Murthy. Sources said that Narasimha had got married just a few months ago. His wife, who had married him for love, has been left widowed within six months of marriage, sending shockwaves of grief through both families. The sudden loss has intensified the emotional pain and trauma faced by the villagers.

An atmosphere of mourning prevails in Ajjawara village, with residents expressing anguish over the recurring road accidents in the area. Locals have demanded stricter traffic regulations and safety measures near Ajjawara Gate to prevent such fatal incidents in the future.

Officials from the district administration have assured that all necessary procedures will be completed swiftly to provide relief to the affected families. Meanwhile, police have registered a case and initiated an investigation into the accident to determine the exact cause and responsibility. The tragic incident has once again highlighted the urgent need for improved road safety and enforcement to protect young lives.

Villagers Halt Soil Survey in Becharak Madure Hale Uur

HOSAKOTE

Tension prevailed at Becharak Madure Hale Uur village near Nandagudi as local residents protested against government officials who had arrived to conduct a soil survey. The villagers stopped the officials midway and demanded an immediate halt to the survey, suspecting that it was being carried out to facilitate the transfer of government land to a private company.

According to sources, the protest began after Nandagudi Gram Panchayat Secretary Tejas Gowda and Surveyor Zakir Hussain reached the village to undertake a government land survey. Upon learning about their presence and the purpose of the visit, villagers gathered at the site in large numbers and questioned the officials about the intent behind the survey work.

The villagers alleged that the survey was part of a larger plan to legitimise the transfer of government land to a private entity. They directly challenged the officials, asking whether the land survey was meant to benefit a private company. As tensions escalated and the villagers continued their resistance, the officials reportedly failed to provide satisfactory answers to the questions raised by the residents and eventually left the spot.

Villagers further alleged that a private company has been constructing a warehouse on nearly 43 acres of land located between Becharak Madure old town and Nandagudi village for the past four months. According to them, the land in question is government-owned and has allegedly been sold to the private company using fake and forged documents. The protesters claimed that the construction activity amounts to blatant encroachment and demanded immediate intervention by higher authorities.

Officials prepare for Shivayogi Jayanti

KOPPAL

Koppal district administration has directed all departments to prepare for Sri Shivayogi Siddarameshwara Jayanti celebrations at the district headquarters. Additional Deputy Commissioner Siddarameshwara presided over a preliminary meeting, announcing the Jayanti will be observed on January 28 instead of January 15 due to Makara Sankranti and community suggestions. Officials were instructed to ensure the celebration is observed in all government offices, taluk offices, schools, colleges, hostels, and gram panchayats. A procession carrying the portrait of Sri Shivayogi Siddarameshwara will begin at 9 am from Gavisiddeshwara Mutt to Sahitya Bhavan, followed by stage programmes including prayers, a lecture, and cultural events. Departments were directed to ensure cleanliness, drinking water, decorations, invitations, and coordination for smooth celebrations.

CMCRI Invites Applications for Nursing Posts

CHITRADURGA

In a significant development for the healthcare sector in central Karnataka, the Chitradurga Medical College and Research Institute (CMCRI) has invited applications for vacant nursing officer posts on a contractual basis. The announcement was issued on December 26 as part of efforts to strengthen patient care services at the government-run medical institution in Chitradurga district.

According to officials, eligible and interested candidates can apply for the nursing officer positions by following the guidelines provided on the official website of the institute. The Assistant Administrative Officer of CMCRI stated that detailed information regarding eligibility criteria, application procedures, required documents, and deadlines is available on the institute's official portal. The recruitment drive is expected to help address staffing needs and improve healthcare delivery at the hospital attached to the medical college.

Meanwhile, the education sector in Chitradurga is also set for an active academic engagement, with the Department of School Education organizing district-level co-curricular competitions for teachers. The event will be held on December 27 from 10 a.m. at the Government Boys Pre-University College in Chitradurga city. Teachers from both primary and secondary schools across the district are expected to participate.

Five Injured in Car Crash While Returning from Christmas Visit

NELAMANGALA

A family returning home after Christmas celebrations met with a tragic accident near Thotagere, leaving two dead

In a tragic road accident that occurred when two members of a family lost their lives while five others sustained serious injuries after their car crashed into a tree near Thotagere. The incident took place as the family was returning from Gouribidanur to Dasarahalli after spending time together following Christmas celebrations.

According to police sources, the car lost control while negotiating a turn at Thotagere. The vehicle reportedly skidded off the road and rammed into a roadside tree with great force, resulting in a devastating impact. Software engineer Harish, aged 39, and his elderly father Veerabhadra, aged 80, died on the spot due to the severity of the crash.

The other occupants of the car — Harish's mother Gouramma (62), wife Maithri (32), daughter Siri (10), and his aunt's daughter Vandana (8) — sustained serious injuries in the accident. They were rushed to a nearby hospital by passersby and emergency responders. Hospital authorities stated that the injured are undergoing treatment and are being closely monitored, as some of them suffered critical injuries.

Police officials said preliminary findings suggest that the accident occurred due to loss of control at the turning, though the exact cause will be determined after a detailed investigation. The Madanayakanahalli Police have registered a case in connection with the incident and initiated further inquiries.

The bodies of the deceased were shifted to the government mortuary at Nelamangala for post-mortem examination. After completion of legal formalities, the bodies are expected to be handed over to the family for last rites.

The incident has sent shockwaves through relatives and acquaintances, who described Harish as a dedicated professional and a devoted family man. Locals have also raised concerns over road safety near the Thotagere turning, stating that accidents have occurred in the past due to sharp curves and inadequate warning signage. Authorities have urged motorists to exercise caution while driving, especially during night hours and while negotiating turns, to prevent such heartbreaking tragedies.

The historic Subrahmanya Swamy Marathotsava at Ghati witnessed massive participation

Historic Subrahmanya Swamy Marathotsava Held with Grandeur at Ghati

DODDABALLAPURA

The historic Subrahmanya Swamy Swami Marathotsava was celebrated with great pomp and religious fervour in the Ghati area of Doddaballapura taluk. The grand chariot festival attracted thousands of devotees from various parts of Karnataka, turning the temple town into a vibrant centre of spiritual activity and devotion.

The annual Marathotsava, associated with the revered Ghati Subrahmanya Swamy Temple, holds immense religious significance for devotees, especially those seeking blessings for family welfare, prosperity, and the fulfilment of vows. From early morning, devotees thronged the temple premises, offering prayers and participating in rituals associated with the festival.

At around 12 noon, the ceremonial chariot procession was formally flagged off in the presence of a large gathering of devotees. The event was inaugurated by Ramalinga Reddy, Karnataka Muzrai Department Minister, along with District In-charge Minister K.H. Muniyappa and Dheeraj Muniraju, MLA of Doddaballapura. Their presence added prominence to the occasion, highlighting the importance of the festival in the region's cultural and religious calendar.

As the richly decorated chariot rolled through the designated path, devotees offered fruits, flowers, and other offerings, praying earnestly for the fulfilment of their wishes. The chanting of hymns and devotional songs created a spiritually charged atmosphere, with devotees expressing deep reverence towards Lord Subrahmanya.

Extensive arrangements were made to ensure the smooth conduct of the festival and the safety of devotees. Special measures were implemented to prevent overcrowding near the chariot route and temple premises. Notably, this was the first time the District Collector personally oversaw the arrangements for the Marathotsava. Authorities ensured systematic darshan arrangements so that devotees could worship the deity without standing in long queues or facing confusion.

Basic amenities, crowd management, and coordination among departments were meticulously planned, earning appreciation from devotees. The successful conduct of the Marathotsava reaffirmed Ghati's status as a major spiritual destination and reflected the administration's commitment to preserving religious traditions while ensuring public convenience.

Vedike demands PM to ensure safety of Hindus in strife-torn Bangladesh

MYSURU

A symbolic protest was staged by Mysuru Kannada Vedike at Agrahara Circle in the city on Friday urging the BJP led NDA Government to protect the minority Hindus who are being tortured and killed in neighboring Bangladesh.

The Vedike members alleged that the government that came to power in the name of Hindus is sitting with its eyes closed even as Hindus are being attacked in a neighboring country. For the past one year, deadly attacks on Hindus have been taking place in Bangladesh. After shelter was given in India to the ousted Prime Minister of that country Shaikh Hasina, the incidents have turned extremely brutal. Muslims there are allegedly barging into Hindu homes, raping women and girls, killing men, dragging them onto the streets and beating them with clubs and machetes. Such cruel incidents are taking place continuously. Despite all this, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not made a statement on the matter as he appears to be engrossed only in foreign tours. Even though Bangladesh is a country that was formed after partition from India, no words of consolation or concern are being expressed about the suffering of Hindus there. If there is Ram Rajya in India, in the neighbouring country the rule of Ravana is being unleashed on Hindus. Hindus there are pleading for India to bring them here and protect them. In India, the External Affairs Minister speaks frequently on various matters, but the enemy country Pakistan's terrorists are allegedly instigating people in Bangladesh to attack Hindus. Already, a large number of people from Bangladesh have entered India, and some among them have even obtained Aadhaar cards and become voters.

BUS DRIVER DIES UNTREATED

Injured Driver Dies; Family Alleges Delay in Treatment

***Continued** from page 1*

In a tragic turn of events following the recent horrific bus accident near Gorlathu Cross, private bus driver Mohammad Rafiq (42), who had sustained serious injuries, died during treatment, plunging his family into deep grief. Rafiq, who was battling for life after the accident, reportedly succumbed to his injuries after undergoing surgery.

According to information shared by Rafiq's wife, her husband had suffered severe internal injuries, particularly to his stomach, during the accident. She stated that several internal organs were damaged due to the impact. Doctors attending to him had clearly informed the family that his condition was extremely critical and that there was no guarantee of survival even after surgery.

"Before the operation, doctors told us the chances of survival were very low. Still, we gave our consent, hoping for a miracle," Rafiq's wife said, struggling to hold back tears. Following the surgery, Rafiq was shifted to the general ward, and the family believed he had at least crossed the immediate danger.

However, their hopes were shattered the next morning. At around 6.30 am, doctors declared Mohammad Rafiq dead, stating that his body could not withstand the extensive internal damage caused by the accident. Family members allege that despite his critical condition, timely and intensive treatment could have improved his chances of survival.

The sudden demise of the 42-year-old driver has left his family shattered emotionally and financially. Rafiq was the sole breadwinner of the family, and his death has raised serious concerns about the future of his dependents. Relatives and locals gathered at the hospital to console the grieving family, expressing anger and sorrow over the loss.

VISHWAKARMA IMMORTAL SCULPTOR JAKANACHARI MEMORIAL DAY TO BE OBSERVED

KOPPAL

The district administration has called for meaningful observance of Vishwakarma Immortal Sculptor Jakanachari Memorial Day on January 1, 2026, at the district headquarters in Koppal. The direction was given by Additional Deputy Commissioner Siddarameshwara while presiding over a preparatory meeting held on Friday at the Deputy Commissioner's office auditorium. Addressing officials and community representatives, the Additional Deputy Commissioner said the Memorial Day should be observed in a simple yet meaningful manner, respecting the wishes of community leaders. As part of the programme, a special worship and floral tribute will be offered to the portrait of Vishwakarma immortal sculptor Jakanachari at 10.30 am on January 1 at the Deputy Commissioner's office auditorium. He urged leaders of the Vishwakarma community and other social representatives to participate in the event.

QUICK READ

MLA Lays Foundation for Milk Cooperative Building

Mandya

In a significant boost to rural infrastructure and the dairy sector, P. Ravikumar Gowda performed the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a new building for the Milk Producers' Cooperative Society at Arishinagere village in Mandya taluk. The ceremony was held in the presence of local leaders, cooperative representatives, and villagers. Addressing the gathering after the guddali puja, the MLA said that the region had been deprived of basic infrastructure such as proper roads and drainage systems for several years. He assured residents that all internal roads in the area would be asphalted in a phased manner during his tenure. He reiterated his commitment to ensuring balanced development across rural areas and improving connectivity for farmers and villagers.

Demand to File Cases against Agencies with Substandard Food

Koppal

The Akshara Dasoha Midday Meal Cooks' Union (affiliated to IFTU) has demanded the registration of criminal cases and strict legal action against agencies and contractors supplying substandard food materials to the midday meal scheme in Koppal. The demand was made through a memorandum submitted on Friday to Suresh B. Itnal, addressed to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa. In the memorandum, union leaders alleged that extremely poor-quality food grains and other materials are being supplied to government and government-aided private schools across Koppal district. They claimed that despite repeatedly informing midday meal officials about the inferior quality of ration supplies, no serious action was taken, resulting in the continued distribution of the same substandard food to schools.

Railways MoS V. Somanna Inspects Renovation Works at Bidadi Station

Railways Minister V. Somanna inspected renovation works at Bidadi station and assured passengers their demands would be reviewed

BIDADI

Union Minister of State for Railways V. Somanna visited Bidadi in Ramanagar district on Friday morning and conducted an inspection of the ongoing renovation and development works at the town's railway station. The visit comes amid efforts by Indian Railways to modernise stations and improve passenger amenities across key suburban and industrial corridors in Karnataka.

During the inspection, the minister reviewed several components of the renovation project, including the expansion of the station platform and allied infrastructure upgrades. Officials briefed him on the progress of the works, timelines, and the scope of improvements aimed at easing passenger movement and enhancing safety and convenience. Somanna also walked along the platform to observe the facilities first-hand.

Interacting directly with commuters, the minister sought feedback on railway services at Bidadi. Passengers raised multiple demands, highlighting the need for a dedicated ticket booking system at the station to reduce queues and dependence on nearby stations. They also urged the construction of a lower bridge at the station to facilitate safer and quicker connectivity between the town and Banandur, citing daily commuter pressure.

Commuters pointed out that Bidadi is a major industrial hub that witnesses the movement of thousands of workers every day by train. Given the high passenger footfall, they requested that important long-distance and express trains be given scheduled halts at Bidadi railway station to better serve the working population and residents of surrounding areas.

Responding to the concerns, Minister Somanna assured passengers that their demands would be taken up with the concerned railway authorities for consideration. He emphasised the government's focus on strengthening suburban rail connectivity and upgrading stations that serve industrial belts, adding that passenger convenience would remain a priority in future planning.

Former MLA Shafi Ahmed Releases New Calendar

TUMAKURU

A new calendar specially published for the Urdu-speaking community was formally released in Tumakuru by former MLA Shafi Ahmed. The release event was held in the city and witnessed the participation of community leaders, well-wishers, and members of the Urdu-speaking population. Speaking on the occasion, Shafi Ahmed said the calendar has been designed keeping in mind the cultural, social, and religious significance of the Urdu-speaking community. He stated that such initiatives help preserve linguistic heritage and promote unity among different sections of society. The calendar includes important dates, festivals, and occasions relevant to the community, along with messages that encourage harmony and mutual respect.

The former MLA emphasised the importance of promoting languages like Urdu, which have played a significant role in India's cultural and literary history. He said that language is not just a means of communication but also a reflection of identity, tradition, and shared values. By releasing the calendar, he hoped to strengthen cultural bonds and instil pride among Urdu-speaking families in Tumakuru. Community representatives who attended the programme appreciated the initiative and said the calendar would be useful for households, educational institutions, and social organisations. They noted that such efforts contribute to greater awareness about important dates and events while also encouraging the younger generation to stay connected to their linguistic roots. Several speakers highlighted that Tumakuru has a rich tradition of communal harmony, with people from different linguistic and religious backgrounds living together peacefully. They said initiatives like this calendar release further reinforce the spirit of inclusiveness and coexistence in the city.

City Council President Launches Scathing Attack on MLA Iqbal

RAMANAGARA

A heated political confrontation unfolded in Ramanagara when City Municipal Council President Seshadri openly lashed out at local MLA Iqbal Hussain during a municipal council meeting. The sharp exchange, described by attendees as unusually intense, has sparked fresh debate in the district's political circles.

The confrontation reportedly arose during discussions on pending development works and civic issues within the city limits. Addressing the council, President Seshadri accused the MLA of failing to provide adequate support for key infrastructure projects. He alleged that delays in securing funds and lack of coordination from the legislator's office had hampered progress on roads, drainage systems, drinking water supply, and sanitation works. Despite repeated representations, the city continues to struggle with basic civic amenities. The responsibility cannot be shifted entirely onto the city council, Seshadri reportedly said, criticising what he termed as the MLA's indifference towards urban development. His remarks drew strong reactions from council members aligned with the MLA.

Political tensions flared in Ramanagara as City Council President Seshadri sharply criticised MLA Iqbal during a meeting

Responding to the allegations, MLA Iqbal Hussain rejected the accusations and defended his record. He stated that he had made consistent efforts to bring government grants to Ramanagara and argued that administrative delays and internal issues within the city council were equally responsible for stalled projects. He maintained that he remained committed to the overall development of the constituency.

The exchange quickly escalated into a verbal duel, prompting senior council members to intervene and restore order. Several members urged both leaders to set aside political differences and work collaboratively in the interest of the public. They warned that continued infighting could adversely affect the pace of development and erode public trust.

The incident has drawn reactions from local residents, many of whom expressed disappointment over the public display of political discord. Citizens stressed that they were more concerned about solutions to everyday problems than political blame games. What the city needs is cooperation, not confrontation, said a resident.

Businessman Duped of ₹54.80 Lakh in Online Trading Scam

TUMAKURU

In a major cyber fraud case reported from Tumakuru, a local businessman has been allegedly duped of ₹54.80 lakh after fraudsters promised him high returns through online trading investments. The victim has been identified as P. Shubha, a businessman from Upparahalli, who fell prey to an elaborate digital scam operated through social media platforms.

According to the complaint, Shubha came across an Instagram page named IPO Guru, which claimed to offer lucrative investment opportunities with assured profits through online trading, including schemes labelled as Pre-IPO and Bulk Trade. Believing the claims, he clicked on the page and subsequently added his mobile number to a WhatsApp group linked to the so-called IPO Guru network. Within the WhatsApp group, the accused regularly shared investment tips, screenshots of alleged profits, and testimonials aimed at building trust among members. Encouraged by these messages, Shubha clicked on a trading-related link shared in the group, submitted the required personal and financial documents, and opened what he believed to be a legitimate trading account. Between November 25 and December 19, Shubha transferred a total of ₹57.70 lakh in stages to various bank accounts and UPI IDs provided by the fraudsters.

DOCUMENT LOST & CHANGE of NAME

AFFIDAVIT

I, **DHANEESH RAJ DILEEPKUMAR JULADEVI,** S/o Dileep Kumar Dharmarajan Shakunthala, aged about 39 years, Residing at No.146/1, 6th Cross, Jai Jawan Nagar, Subbayyana Palya, Bengaluru North, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560033, was holding an **Indian Passport bearing No. V6512313,** issued on 28-01-2022 by the Regional Passport Office, Bengaluru, was valid till 27-01-2032. accidentally **lost/misplaced** have reported the said loss to the Bengaluru City Police and a Lost Report has been registered vide Lost Report No. 1975160/2025 dated 24-12-2025. in the lost passport, **my father's name was wrongly printed** as: **"DILEEPKUMAR DHARMARAJAN SANKARAMANDIRAM"** This was due to an inadvertent clerical/recording error at the time of issuance. The correct, true and actual name of my father is: **"DILEEPKUMAR DHARMARAJAN SHAKUNTALA"** I am making this affidavit to request the **Regional Passport Office, Bengaluru** to: Issue me a **fresh passport** in lieu of the lost passport, and **correct my father's name** in the new passport as **"DILEEPKUMAR DHARMARAJAN SHAKUNTALA"** based on this sworn declaration and supporting records. I solemnly declare that the statements made herein are **true, correct and complete** to the best of my knowledge and belief and nothing material has been suppressed.

Place: Bengaluru **DEPONENT**
Date: 26/12/2025 **DHANEESH RAJ DILEEPKUMAR JULADEVI**
Verified at Bengaluru on this 26th day of December 2025.
SWORN TO BEFORE ME
Y.R. CHARDRASEKAR B.Com., LL.B., ADVOCATE
& NOTARY, No. 3, 2nd Main, 10th Cross,
kanakanagar, R.T.Nagar Post, Bengaluru-560032

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MADHU JALAKI W/o MALLIKARJUN SWAMY, R/o Flat No 201, 2nd Floor, Pacific Pearl Apartment, 4th Cross, B V B Back Gate, Vidyanagar, Hubli, Dharwad, Karnataka-580021, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SHREYANKA MALLIKARJUN SWAMY.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SANTHOSHKUMAR V S/o VENUGOPAL REDDY, R/o No 302, Park Square Apartment, 19th Main, Near Agara Bus Depot, 4th Sector, H S R Layout, Hsr Layout, Bangalore South, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560102, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SANTOSH RAM REDDY.

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact:
080-41209042

PUBLIC NOTICE

LOSS OF DOCUMENTS

I, Sri. Thimmarayappa, S/O Late Thimmaiah, aged about 80 years, resident of Bhantarakuppe Village, Soluru Hobli, Magadi Taluk, Bengaluru South Taluk, hereby declare that I have lost the original Mother deed (Hakku Pathra) 15.11.1972 issued by Bhachenahatti Mandala Panchaythi Bachenahatti Village, in favour of Sri. B.T. Thimmarayappa 15.11.1972 were lost on 19.12.2025 while traveling from Bhantarakuppe Village to Magadi Town, hence I request to if any person in contact with the item of found it, they may kindly return it to my client or the address mentioned below. In this regard my client also lodged a police complaint in respect of the lost document through online, which has been registered as lost Report No. 1970397/2025 on 22-12-2025 hand over the said document.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of Property bearing E- Khatha No. 152900300600400052 and site No. 43 measuring to an extent of East-West 30 and North-South 40 feet totally measuring 111.48 square feet, situated at Bhantarakuppe Village, Soluru Hobli, Magadi Taluk, Bengaluru South Taluk and bounded on:
East by: Property belongs to Nanjundaiah's Home. West by: Road. North by: Road and Temple. South by : Government Gutte

SMT.RAMYA.T B.A.,LL.B., ADVOCATE,
KAR-1325/13 K.H.Complex, Opp.Court
Complex, Magadi Town, Ramanagara
District MOB: 9663385547
Place: Magadi Date: 26-12-2025

ನಗರಸಭಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿ
ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ

ಕಛೇರಿ ವಿಳಾಸ: ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ರಸ್ತೆ, ವಾರ್ಡ್ 10, ಎನ್ ಆರ್ ಬಡಾವಣೆ
ಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿ–563 125, ದೂರವಾಣಿ: 08154–252056/ ಸಹಾಯವಾಣಿ:
08154–252117, ಇ–ಮೇಲ್:itstaff_ulb_chintamanicity@yahoo.in,
cmc.chintamani@gmail.com, ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್:www.chintamanicity.gov.in
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ನಸಚಿ/ತಾಂಶಾ/ಸಿ.ಆರ್/110/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 23.12.2025

ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅಧಿಸೂಚನೆ

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ರಾಜ್ಯಪಾಲರ ಪರವಾಗಿ ಪೌರಾಯುಕ್ತರು ನಗರಸಭೆ ಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿ ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ ಇವರು ಕೆಟಿಪಿಪಿ 2000 ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟ್‌ಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ನೊಂದಾಯಿಸಿರುವ ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: **(1)** DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT52888, **(2)** DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT52386, **(3)** DMA/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT52986. ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಲು ಷರತ್ತುಗಳಿಗೆ ಒಳಪಟ್ಟು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬಹುದು. **ಸೂಚನೆಗಳು:** ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ.ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ **ನಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 07.01.2026 ರಂದು ಸಮಯ ಸಂಜೆ 17:30 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ.** ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ **ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 09.01.2026 ರಂದು ಸಮಯ ಬೆಳಗ್ಗೆ 11:30 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ.** ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ **ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 12.01.2026 ರಂದು ಸಮಯ ಬೆಳಗ್ಗೆ 11:30 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ.**

ಸಹಿ/– ಪೌರಾಯುಕ್ತರು, ನಗರಸಭೆ, ಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿ

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ/ಆರ್.ಓ.ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:335/ಕೆಎಸ್‌ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

Government of Karnataka
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
MINOR IRRIGATION AND GROUND WATER DEVELOPMENT DIVISION,
KALABURAGI, e-mail: midnglb@rediffmail.com / midnglb1@gmail.com Ph.08472 - 220196

IFT No. EE/MI&GWD D/KAL/PB-3/2025-26/3852 Date : 26-12-2025

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (IFT KW-3)

1) DETAIL OF WORK : **THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MI & GWD DIVISION, KALABURAGI INVITES TENDER FROM THE ELIGIBLE TENDERERS FOR THE WORK UNDER 4702 A.P.B.** 2) Amount of Estimate : **Rs.80,66,621.90,** 3) Eligibility of contractor : Class-3 & above, 4) Details of Tender application Amount and EMD Amount : Tender fee As per KPP Portal EMD **Rs. 1,61,400.00,** 5) Last Date & Time for Tender Queries/Clarifications : **15.01.2026 Up to 11.00 Hours**, 6) Last date & Time for Receipt of tenders : **16.01.2026 upto 17.30 hours,** 7) Date & Time for opening of Techical Bid : **17.01.2026 up to 17.30 hous,** 8) Date & Time for opening of Financial Bid : **19.01.2026 up to 17.30 hours** 9) Addl. Information : Executive Engineer M.I. & GWD Division Kalaburagi, 10) Address of E-Portal : https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Development
Division, Kalaburagi

DIPR/Kalaburagi/898/Deshpande Publicity/2025-26

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Vidhana Soudha, Bangalore.

No. FD 25 JS(B&R) 2025 **Bengaluru, December 27, 2025**

PRESS COMMUNIQUE

It is notified for general information that the outstanding balance of **8.38% Karnataka SDL 2026** issued in terms of the Government of **Karnataka,** Finance Department Notification **No. FD 01 BMB 2015(P) Dated January 21, 2016** will be repaid at par on **January 27, 2026** with interest due up to and including **January 26, 2026.** In the event of a holiday being declared on the aforesaid date by any State Government under the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, the loan will be repaid by the paying offices in that State on the previous working day. **No interest will accrue on the loan from and after January 27, 2026**

2. As per sub-regulation 24 (2) and 24 (3) of Government Securities Regulations, 2007 payment of maturity proceeds to the registered holder of Government Security held in the form of Subsidiary General Ledger or Constituent Subsidiary General Ledger account or Stock Certificate shall be made by a pay order incorporating the relevant particulars of his bank account or by credit to the account of the holder in any bank having facility of receipt of funds through electronic means. For the purpose of making payment in respect of the securities, the original subscriber or the subsequent holders of such a Government Securities, as the case may be, shall submit to the Bank or Treasury and Sub Treasury or branch of State Bank of India, where they are enfaced / registered for payment of interest, as the case may be, the relevant particulars of their bank account.

3. However, in the absence of relevant particulars of bank account / mandate for receipt of funds through electronic means, to facilitate repayment on the due date, holders of **8.38% Karnataka SDL 2026** should tender their securities at the Public Debt Office, 20 days in advance. The securities should be tendered for repayment, duly discharged on the reverse there of as under:

"Received the Principal due on the Certificate".

4. It should be particularly noted that at places where the treasury work is done by a branch of the State Bank of India, the securities, if they are in the form of Stock Certificates, should be tendered at the branch of the bank concerned and not at the Treasury or Sub-Treasury.

5. Holders who wish to receive payment at places other than those where the securities have been enfaced for payment should send them duly discharged to the Public Debt Office concerned by Registered and Insured Post. The Public Debt Office will make payment by issuing a draft payable at any Treasury / Sub- Treasury or branch of State Bank of India conducting Government Treasury work in the State of **Karnataka.**

Sd/- (Ikram Shariff)
Joint Secretary to Government
(Budget & Resources), Finance Department

DIPR/CP/4637/Zen/2025-26

MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE LTD.

MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE LIMITED

FORMERLY MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE PVT LTD
CIN : U65923KL2010PLC039179
Regd Office: IV/470A (OLD) W/638A (NEW) Manappuram House Valapad Thrissur, Kerala 680567
Corp Office: Manappuram Home Finance Limited, Third Floor, Unit No. 301 to 315, A Wing, 'Kanakia Wall Street', Andheri-Kurla Road, Andheri East, Mumbai-400093, Maharashtra.
Phone No.: 022-66211000, **Website:** www.manappuramhomefin.com

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of **Manappuram Home Finance Ltd ("MAHOFIN")** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest *[Act], 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 9 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a **Demand Notice** calling upon the borrowers and co-borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice and Interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic** possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said *[Act] read with rule 9 of the said rules. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Manappuram Home Finance Ltd as mentioned below for each of the respective properties:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower and Co-borrower / Loan account number/ Branch	Description Of Secured Asset In Respect Of Which Interest Has Been Created	Date of Demand Notice sent & Outstanding Amount	Date of Possession
1	1. Late Umesha Naik Since Deceased So Addresing To His Legal Heirs, A. Sharavathi, **/MLAP0051046499/** Shimoga	All That The Piece or Parcel of Site Along With Structure Standing There On Being Bearing Site/Property No. 2/2, E-Property No. 152400404300420017, Measuring Total 216.50 Sq. Meter, Including 65.03 Sq. Meter House, Situated At Doddajogihalli Village, Tharalaghatta Village Panchayath, Shikaripura Taluk, Shivamogga District, Karnataka - 577214. East-Property of Daram Bai W/O Shivuga Naik, West-Property of Gowri Bai, South-Road, North-Road	04-10-2025 & Rs.573794/-	24-12-2025
2	1. Late Manjappa H Since Deceased So Addresing To His Legal Heirs, A. Ramesh R, B. Mallappa L, **/NHL00510004878/** Shimoga	All That Part And Parcel of The Property Bearing Rdpr No.152400403800100012, As Per Gram Panchayat Record Property No.85B Measuring In Total 226.08 Sq. Meter Property Situated At Chikkamagadi Village, Chikkamagadi Gram Panchayat Office, Shikaripura Taluk, Shivamogga District, Karnataka - 577433. East-Property Belongs To Rudrappa, West-Property Belongs To Mallappa, South-Share Belongs To Kallappa, North-Gram Panchayat Road	04-10-2025 & Rs.142550/-	24-12-2025
3	1. Late Madesha Since Deceased So Addresing To His Legal Heirs, A. Leelavathi K, B. Sruthi, **/NHL00900035787/** Vivekananda Circle	All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No. 566, P.I.D No.152100301600520357, Situated At Dhanaguru Grama, Dhanaguru Gramapanchayat, Malavalli Block, Mandya (D), Karnataka - 571430. Admeasuring 108.70 Sq Mts. East-House of Sheena, West-Road, South-Property Of Raju, North-Property of Madamma	04-10-2025 & Rs.392034/-	24-12-2025
4	Rama Krishna, Sharada S, Chidananda D, **/NHL01170031229/** Raichur	All That Piece And Parcel of The Residential Plot Bearing Cmc No. 6-2-65&66/2 Bearing Its E-Property No.35-510-243/2 Totally Measuring 60.1452 Sq Meters, Situated At Ward No.26 Amdedkar Nagr Sindhanur, Cmc Sindhanur.tq Sindhanur Dist Raichur, Karnataka - 584128. East-Road, West- Property No. 35-510-243/1, South-Property No. 35-156-57, North-Property No. 35-510-243/3	07-10-2025 & Rs.530360/-	24-12-2025
5	Narasimharaju N G, Komala C T, Dinesha T, **/NLAP0093004945/** Tumkur	All That Piece And Parcel of The Residential Building Constructed In Site No.56 Bearing Grama Panchayath Khatha No.268/56 And E-Khatha No.152500901300101661, Measuring East To West: 6.096 Mtrs And North To South: 9.144 Mtrs Is Situated At Oorukere Village, Kasaba Hobli, Tumkur Taluk, Karnataka - 572106. East-Site No. 55, West-Site No. 57, South-Road, North-Hiduvali Land	07-10-2025 & Rs.570705/-	24-12-2025
6	Shanthakumari P B, Nagendrappa N, **/MLAP0051031547/** Shimoga	All That The Piece or Parcel of Site Along With Structure Standing There On Being Bearing Site/Khatha/A Property No. 569, E-Swathu No. 151000502000500590, Measuring East-West 12.192 Meter X North-South 9.144 Meter Total 111.48 Sq. Meter, Situated At Lakkihalli Village, Lakkihalli Village Panchayath, Hosadurga Taluk, Chitradurga District, Karnataka - 577527. East-Property of Siddppa, West-Property of Rajappa, South-Pathway, North-Pathway	07-10-2025 & Rs.316976/-	24-12-2025
7	Arathi S, Dayananda K, Girisha Nayaka D, **/MHL00910014726/** Hassan	All That Piece And Parcel of The Site And House Property Bearing No. 152100102300500252, Gram Panchayath Property No. 213 And Property Situated At Kariganahalli Village, Chowdenahalli Gram Panchayath, Krishnarajapete Taluk, Mandya District, Karnataka - 571423 Ad Measuring Totally 82.13 Square Meter. East- Property Belongs To Sri. Ravi., West-Conservancy And House Property Belongs To Sri. Katte Javarappa, South-Road, North-Road	08-10-2025 & Rs.213504/-	24-12-2025
8	Ananda V, Doddamma V, Venkatachelanayaka B, **/NHL00900008158/** Vivekananda Circle	All That Piece And Parcel of Property Bearing Kollegala Nagarasabha Khatha Assessment No. 1201 P.I.D. No. 55-511-606A Situated At Ward No. 30 Bastipura, Kollegala, Chamarajanagar, Karnataka - 571440 Measuring East To West : 9.44 Meters And North To South: 8.22 Meters. East-Road, West-Private Property, South-Vacant Site, North-House of Sarasamma	08-10-2025 & Rs.329022/-	24-12-2025
9	Nataraju L, Umavathi P, Prasannachari V, **/NHL00340013038/** Mysore	All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No.2543/13A, P.I.d. No.152100701700202659, Situated At Arakere Village, Arakere Grama Panchayath, Srirangapatna Taluk, Mandya District, Karnataka - 571415 Measuring Totally 111.48 Square Meters. East-Site No. 14 A, West-Site No. 12A, South-Ashraya 1st Stage Site, North-Road	08-10-2025 & Rs.322884/-	24-12-2025
10	Sangamma C, Sagar T C, **/MHL00510010298/** Shimoga	All That The Piece or Parcel of Site Along With Structure Standing There On Being Bearing Site/Property No. 133/3, E-Property No. 152400502500200155, Measuring Total 69.68 Sq. Meter, Situated At Holehatti-1 Village, Sugur Village Panchayath, Shivamogga Taluk And District, Karnataka - 577216. East-Site No. 134, West-Site No. 133/2, South-Road, North-Conservancy Road	08-10-2025 & Rs.377075/-	24-12-2025
11	Sathyaraju G, Nandini C M, Eramma G, **/NHL00340002319/** Mysore	All That Piece And Parcel of Property Bearing Kottegala Gramapanchayathi Property No. 114 And As Per Form No. 9 And 11 A Unique No. 152200102117420386 Situated At Kottegala Village, Saraguru Taluk, Karnataka -571121 Totally Measuring East To West: 12.192 Meters And North To South: 19.5 Meters. East-House of Kempanaika, West-Road, South-Road, North-House of Rajkumar G	08-10-2025 & Rs.445162/-	24-12-2025
12	Basavaraju D, Roopa M, Dollegowda N, **/NHL00900003056/** Vivekananda Circle	All That Piece And Parcel of Property Bearing Chiddaravalli Gramapanchayathi Property Bearing Bommanahalli Khatha No. 378/24 And As Per Form No. 11 B Unique No. 152200701307920121 Situated At Bommanahalli Village, T. Narasipura Taluk, Mysore, Karnataka - 571120 Measuring East To West: 10.36 Meters And North To South: 10.05 Meters. East-Property of Mahadevamma Wife of Kontaiah, West-Road, South-Property of Sindi Mahadevaiah, North-Road	08-10-2025 & Rs.459698/-	24-12-2025
13	Swamy R, Radha S, Sowmya H S, **/NHL00340000131/** Mysore	All That Piece And Parcel of Property Bearing Govindavadi Gramapanchayathi Property No. 191 And As Per Form No. 11 B Unique No. 150800101400320147 Situated At Halepura Village, Chamarajanagara Taluk, Within The Jurisdiction of Govindavadi Gramapanchayathi In Karnataka - 571128 Measuring East To West: 91.44 Meters And North To South: 12.192 Meters. East-House of Devaraguddegowda, West-Site of Kashichikkatayamma, South-Road, North-Land of Guruswamappa	08-10-2025 & Rs.572621/-	24-12-2025
14	Ramanaik, Danibai, Gangi Bai, **/NHL01440037439/** Shikaripura	All That The Piece Or Parcel of Site Along With Structure Standing There On Being Bearing Site/Property No. 15/1, E-Property No. 152400402400100448, Measuring Total 148.72 Sq. Meter, Including 61.59 Sq. Meter Situated At Manchikoppa Village, Manchikoppa Village Panchayath, Shikaripura Taluk, Shivamogga District, Karnataka - 577428. East-Property of Rama Naika S/O Danya Naika, West-Property of Jemla Naika S/O Keerya Naika, South-Road, North-Road	04-10-2025 & Rs.706488/-	24-12-2025
15	Asha Bai R, Manjunatha Naik, Krishna Naik, Shakku Bayi, **/MLAP0051047118/** Shimoga	All That The Piece or Parcel of Site Along With Structure Standing There On Being Bearing Site/Property No, 32/334, E-Property No. 151200500700200374, Measuring Total 111.483648 Sq. Meter, Including 65.032128 Sq. Meter Building, Situated At Doddethinahalli Village, Kumkova Village Panchayath, Honnalli/Nyamathi Taluk, Davanagere District, Karnataka - 577223. East-Property of Sharada Bai, West-Property of Sevya Naik, South-Site of Survey No. 32, North-Village Panchayath Road	04-10-2025 & Rs.440110/-	24-12-2025
16	Rathnamma B, Govindaiah T, **/MHL00920024219/** Vinayanagar Ramnagara	All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No.269/290, P.I.D. No. 152900100700700289, Situated At Abburu Village, Dashawara Grama Panchayath, Channapatna Taluk And Ramanagara District, Karnataka - 562108 Measuring East To West 9.144 Meters And North To South 13.716 Meters, Totally 125.41 Square Meters. East- House Belongs To Venkatamma W/O Narayannaiah, West-Vacant Place Belongs To Rathnamma W/O Govindaiah, South-House Belongs To Sarojamma W/O Siddaiah, North-Road	04-10-2025 & Rs.513569/-	24-12-2025
17	Mamatha M D, Nagaraja M J, Eramma, **/NHL00910048454/** Hassan	All That Piece And Parcel of The Site And House Property Bearing Property Id No. 151600302800700028, Gram Panchayath Property No. 28 And Property Situated At Musavatthuru Village, Aladahalli Gram Panchayath, Arkalgud Taluk, Hassan District, Karnataka - 573102 Totally Measuring 136.75 Square Meters. East-Property of Sri. Rangaiah Kariaiah, West-Road, South-House Property of Smt. Sunitha., North-House Property of Sri. Rangaiah	04-10-2025 & Rs.517260/-	24-12-2025

Date: 27th December 2025 | Place: KARNATAKA **Sd/- Authorised Officer Manappuram Home Finance Ltd**

QUICK READ

Red Fort blast: Court extends NIA custody of 2 accused

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday allowed the National Investigation Agency to keep two suspects in custody in the Red Fort blast case. Judge Prashant Sharma approved ten more days of questioning for Yasir Ahmed Dar and eight days for Dr Bilal Naseer Malla. The hearing was held without media access. Investigators say Umar-un-Nabi planned the attack and died earlier. NIA claims Malla sheltered him and helped remove evidence. Dar, arrested later, is said to be a close associate. Nine people have been arrested so far.

Pro-Hindu rally march towards Bangladesh office

KOLKATA

Members of Hindu Sanhati organised a march on Friday towards the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission office in Kolkata. The protest was held against alleged attacks on Hindu minorities in Bangladesh. The rally began at Sealdah station and moved towards Beckbagan, with protesters raising slogans and planning to submit a memorandum. Police stopped them before the office, placed barricades, and deployed heavy security. Protesters later blocked AJC Bose Road and staged a sit-in demonstration.

Ex-MNS leader Prakash Mahajan joins Shiv Sena

THANE

On Friday, 26th December 2025, former MNS leader Prakash Mahajan joined the Shiv Sena led by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, just two weeks ahead of the state's municipal corporation elections. Mahajan, brother of the late BJP leader Pramod Mahajan, had been part of Raj Thackeray's MNS since 2006 but left earlier this year due to differences with the party leadership.

Tripura Assembly Speaker Biswa Bandhu Sen passes away

Tripura Assembly Speaker and senior BJP leader Biswa Bandhu Sen died on Friday after months of treatment

AGARTALA

Tripura Legislative Assembly Speaker Biswa Bandhu Sen passed away on Friday after receiving medical care for more than four months at a private hospital in Bengaluru. He was 72. Sen, a four-time MLA, is survived by his wife, a son, and a daughter. He began his political career with the Congress before later joining the BJP and becoming a prominent leader in the state.

The Tripura government announced three days of state mourning from December 26 to 28 to honour the late leader. During this period, the national flag will be flown at half-mast across the state, and all official entertainment programmes will remain suspended. Government offices, public sector units, and educational institutions were also closed on Friday. A state funeral will be held on Saturday, December 27. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed deep sorrow over Sen's death, remembering him as a dedicated leader who worked for Tripura's development and social welfare. BJP President and Union Health Minister J. P. Nadda, along with several senior party leaders, also paid tribute, praising his lifelong service to the people. Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha called Sen's death an irreparable loss to the state. He said Sen handled Assembly proceedings with fairness, dignity, and efficiency. Leaders from across party lines, including CPI(M), Congress, and BJP, expressed grief and extended condolences to the family.

Sen suffered a brain haemorrhage on August 8 at Agartala railway station and was first treated locally before being shifted to Bengaluru for advanced care. Despite efforts by doctors, he could not recover. His long public service career remains widely respected in Tripura.

Omar Abdullah rejects pressure amid NC reservation row

SRINAGAR

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah firmly rejected party MP Ruhullah Mehdi's warnings on reservation, saying policies will be decided through law, dialogue, and constitutional process, not pressure or threats.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday strongly responded to senior National Conference leader and MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi over differences on the reservation policy in jobs and professional colleges. Abdullah made it clear that he would not bow to threats or street pressure while taking decisions on sensitive policy matters.

In his sharpest remarks so far, the Chief Minister said he was not afraid of anyone's warnings and would not make wrong decisions under pressure. He stressed that issues like reservation must be handled through legal and constitutional methods, after consulting all concerned groups, rather than through protests or intimidation.

His reaction came after Ruhullah Mehdi warned that he would personally join student protests if the government failed to engage with them by December 27. The MP has also accused the National Conference leadership of not fulfilling promises made during the 2024 election campaign, which helped the party return to power in Jammu and Kashmir.

The latest exchange has brought internal differences within the party into the open, placing Omar Abdullah, who is also the party's vice president, in direct confrontation with Ruhullah Mehdi.

The dispute focuses on proposed changes to the reservation policy by the Omar Abdullah-led cabinet. The government has suggested raising the share for open merit candidates to 40 per cent by cutting the quota for Residents of Backward Areas by three per cent and Economically Weaker Sections by seven per cent. If approved by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, total reservation in jobs and professional courses would be 60 per cent. Officials say the move seeks to ensure fairness and equal opportunities for all communities.

On Manmohan Singh's first death anniversary, Prashant Bhushan regretted past criticism and praised the former Prime Minister's integrity

Prashant Bhushan reflects on Manmohan Singh's legacy

NEW DELHI

Senior lawyer Prashant Bhushan on Friday spoke warmly about former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on his first death anniversary, admitting regret over his role in the Anna Hazare-led anti-corruption movement that strongly criticised Singh. Bhushan said the movement had unfairly targeted a leader who was honest, humble, and well-intentioned, and later helped bring an "undesirable regime" to power.

Posting on social media platform X, Bhushan described Singh as a decent, educated, and sincere person whose humility was often mistaken for weakness. He said he now felt sorry for participating in a campaign that, in his view, wrongly blamed Singh for corruption during the UPA years. Bhushan was earlier a key figure in the India Against Corruption movement and worked closely with Arvind Kejriwal before later parting ways with him.

This was not the first time Bhushan had spoken positively about Singh. Shortly after Singh's death in 2025, he had praised his leadership, calling his time in office a period marked by kindness, inclusion, and a long-term vision for national interest. He had also criticised attempts to portray Singh negatively in films and political narratives.

The Congress party commemorated Manmohan Singh's first death anniversary by paying tributes at his portrait in New Delhi. Party president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi honoured Singh, with Kharge describing him as a rare leader who exemplified knowledge, integrity, and public service. He highlighted Singh's role as Finance Minister in 1991, leading major economic reforms that strengthened India's global standing. Rahul Gandhi also praised Singh's humility, vision, and commitment to inclusive growth, noting his legacy will continue to inspire future generations.

Thane police arrest five trying to sell baby

THANE

Police in Thane, Maharashtra, have busted a human trafficking attempt, arresting five people trying to sell a 7-day-old baby for Rs 6 lakh.

The Anti-Human Trafficking Cell acted on a tip-off and set a trap near a hotel in Badlapur West on Wednesday night. Using a decoy buyer, police confirmed the gang's plan to sell the newborn. The accused received Rs 20,000 via UPI as token money, with the remaining Rs 5.8 lakh to be paid in cash. Police swooped in and arrested all five individuals at the spot.

The arrested were identified as Shankar Sambhaji Manohar (36), who accepted the money; Reshma Shahabuddin Shaikh (35), who had the baby; Nitin Sambhaji Manohar (33) and Shekar Ganesh Jadhav (35), agents from Igatpuri; and Asif Chand Khan (27), an agent from Mankhurd, Mumbai. A sixth accomplice, Sabina, remains at large. Authorities suspect the operation is part of a larger network that kidnaps and sells infants to childless couples.

Satheesan slams CPI(M) over Sonia Gandhi photo row

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Leader of Opposition V.D. Satheesan on Friday downplayed the controversy over a photograph of Congress leader Sonia Gandhi with Unnikrishnan Potti, now arrested in the Sabarimala gold heist case. Satheesan called Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's criticism "cheap" and accused the CPI(M) of creating a distraction from more serious issues.

Satheesan said the photo row was deliberately amplified to divert attention from the alleged Sabarimala gold theft. "This is a classic attempt by the CPI(M) to hide a real problem by manufacturing controversy," he added. He stressed that meeting Sonia Gandhi was not unusual and anyone could do so with an appointment, sarcastically noting that meeting the Chief Minister was far more difficult due to heavy security.

The opposition leader said taking a photograph with Gandhi was harmless, pointing out that similar logic was not applied to the Chief Minister.

Bengal worker lynched over 'Bidi' dispute in Odisha

SAMBALPUR

A migrant worker from West Bengal was beaten to death in Odisha's Sambalpur district on Wednesday night following a dispute over a bidi, police said on Thursday. Six men allegedly demanded the bidi and then asked the workers to show their Aadhaar cards before assaulting them. The victim, identified as Juel Sheikh, later died at Sambalpur hospital, while two others sustained injuries.

Police stated the incident arose from an argument over a bidi, though the workers claimed they were attacked because the assailants suspected them of being Bangladeshis. Sheikh and his colleagues were employed at a construction site in Shanti Nagar under Ainthapali police station. While preparing food at their residence, the attackers confronted them, demanding the bidi and Aadhaar cards. The altercation escalated into violence, with Sheikh being fatally injured.

Majhar Khan, another worker, said the attackers rammed Sheikh's head against a hard object and called them Bangladeshis before assaulting him and two others. Six accused individuals have been arrested, and police are investigating whether others were involved. IGP Himanshu Kumar Lal emphasized the murder is not related to the victims' origin, while Additional SP Srimanta Barik noted the workers had lived in the area for years and knew the attackers.

West Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress condemned the incident, blaming the BJP's alleged anti-Bengali narrative. The party said the lynching reflected a climate where Bengali-speaking citizens are wrongly treated as outsiders and forced to prove their rights.

Naidu hails RSS Chief's contribution to nation building

TIRUPATI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Friday praised RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat for his long-standing efforts in national development and social service. Speaking at the inaugural session of the Bharatiya Vigyan Sammelan 2025, Naidu highlighted Bhagwat's decades-long work in strengthening the RSS while remaining apolitical. He said Bhagwat has expanded the organisation, promoted grassroots service, social harmony, cultural cohesion, and national identity, making a significant contribution to India's progress.Naidu supported Bhagwat's call for families to have at least three children, emphasizing that population management is key to India's demographic dividend and global influence. He also stressed that India's family values provide financial, health, and personal security. The Chief Minister expressed confidence that India could become the world's top economy by 2047 and credited leaders like Bhagwat for preparing the nation with strong values, ethics, and discipline. Naidu called for reducing gaps between rich and poor to ensure dignity and improved living standards for all citizens. He also highlighted India's ancient knowledge and historical contributions in urban planning and engineering, recalling the country's golden era when it accounted for 40 per cent of the global GDP. He cited economic reforms in 1991, IT growth, and plans for quantum computing in Amaravati as evidence of India's resurgence.

Ex-MoS Akbar blames B'desh regime for anti-Hindu violence

MAPUSA

Former Minister of State MJ Akbar on Friday strongly criticised the interim government of Bangladesh, accusing it of fostering "hatred against Hindus as an ideology" amid recent lynching cases targeting minorities. Akbar said the country faces a severe governance crisis, where extremist elements are allegedly tolerated by authorities to secure political survival.

Highlighting the broader failure of the interim administration led by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, he said, "Bangladesh is going through a major crisis of appeasement. The most vicious forces are allowed to operate freely, and crimes against minorities are being abetted by the establishment." He added that the government shows "absolutely no sense of governance," which has contributed to economic decline and rising unemployment, leaving youth frustrated and angry.

Akbar's remarks come after the lynching of two Hindu youths in Bangladesh. On December 18, Dipu Chandra Das was beaten and burned over alleged blasphemy claims in Mymensingh. Days later, Amrit Mondal was lynched in Rajbari district over an extortion allegation. Investigations found no evidence supporting the blasphemy accusation against Das.

Akbar noted the irony of a fertile nation like Bangladesh seeking rice imports amid economic collapse. He criticised the interim government for failing to uphold law and order, asserting that appeasement of extremists threatens both governance and social harmony. The former MoS called on authorities to take strong action against such crimes and warned that tolerance of extremist behaviour could have long-term consequences for Bangladesh's stability and minority safety.

VEER BAL DIWAS

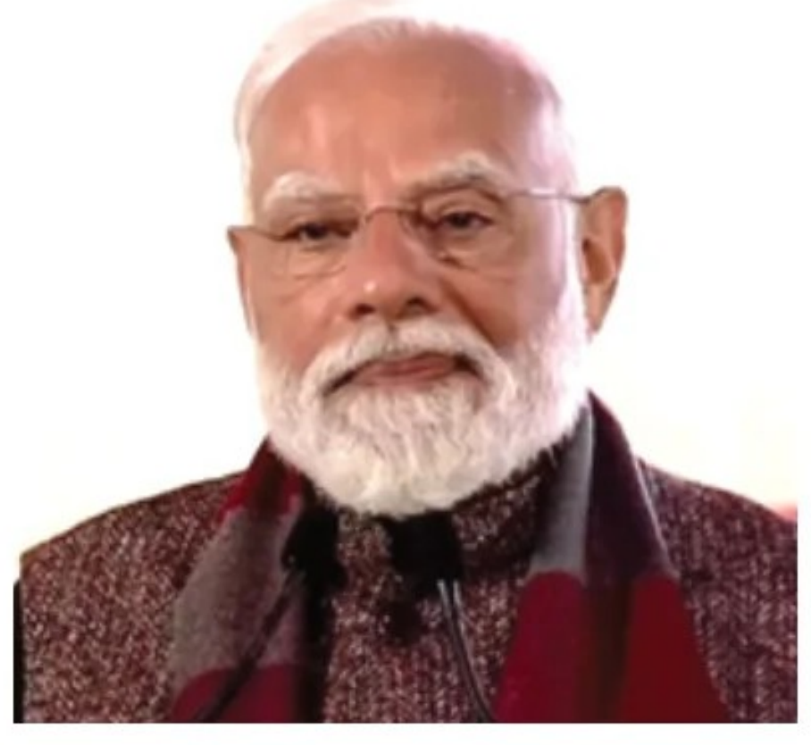
PM Modi inspires youth on Veer Bal Diwas event

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday delivered a motivating message to India's younger generations during Veer Bal Diwas celebrations at Bharat Mandapam. Addressing members of the Yuva Bharat organisation, he urged Gen Z and Gen Alpha to dream big, stay rooted in values, and help lead India towards becoming a developed nation.

Recalling the courage of Sahibzadas Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, the Prime Minister said age should never limit ambition or service to the nation. He told young people that their generation has the strength and ability to take India to new heights. Quoting a Sanskrit verse, he said wisdom deserves respect even when it comes from the young.

PM Modi praised young achievers for proving that meaningful work can begin early in life. He encouraged them to aim higher, reminding them that the country stands firmly behind their dreams. He contrasted today's environment with the past, saying earlier systems discouraged youth from dreaming, while today India actively supports talent and innovation.



Highlighting modern opportunities, he pointed to the internet, startup missions, and platforms that help young people grow with focus and confidence. He also spoke about the New Education Policy, saying it promotes practical learning, questioning, and critical thinking rather than rote memorisation. He mentioned initiatives like Atal Tinkering Labs for building creativity and problem-solving skills.

The Prime Minister advised youth to stay disciplined, avoid distractions of short-term fame, and base decisions on strong principles. He said personal success should motivate others and stressed that young people remain central to government policies in skills, internships, sports, technology, and manufacturing.

Marking Veer Bal Diwas, PM Modi said the sacrifice of the Sahibzadas continues to inspire courage, discipline, and dedication among India's youth, who will shape the nation's future.

QUICK READ

EARTHQUAKE

Earthquake of 4.4 magnitude hits Kachchh in Gujarat

Kachchh

A 4.4-magnitude earthquake shook Kachchh district in Gujarat early on Friday, 26th December 2025, at around 4:30 am. The tremor occurred at a shallow depth of 10 kilometres. The epicentre was recorded at latitude 23.65° North and longitude 70.23° East. The National Centre for Seismology shared the details on X, confirming the earthquake's timing and location. No immediate reports of damage or injuries have come in yet. Residents in the area felt the shaking during the early hours of the morning.

Mother, two sons found hanging in Sagar dist

Sagar

A tragic incident occurred on Friday, 26th December 2025, in Dhonai village of Sagar district, Madhya Pradesh, where a 27-year-old woman and her two young sons were found hanging at their home. The discovery was made in the morning when other family members returned from the fields and saw them inside a room. The house is under Rahli police station limits, around 50 km from Sagar city. Police are investigating the cause of this unfortunate incident.

Centre warns IAS officers on property filing

New Delhi

The Centre has directed all IAS officers to submit their property details on time or face strict action, including disciplinary measures and possible denial of promotion. According to an official communique from the Ministry of Personnel, officers must file their annual Immovable Property Return (IPR) by 31st January each year. The notice emphasized that failure to comply will be considered a valid reason for initiating disciplinary proceedings against the officers. The move aims to ensure transparency and accountability among civil servants.

SIT Extends Probe to TN in Sabarimala Gold Loss Case

Investigators widen search beyond Kerala as SIT pursues key leads across states

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the Sabarimala gold loss case has extended its investigation to Tamil Nadu in search of a businessman suspected to be linked to the incident, police said on Friday.

The SIT is searching for a jeweller named Balamurughan, also known as D Mani, from Dindigul district in Tamil Nadu. According to police sources, Mani and one of his associates came under the scanner after senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala alleged the involvement of an international antique racket in the loss of gold from the Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple.

Following Chennithala's statement, the SIT recorded the statement of an NRI businessman, who informed investigators that gold from Sabarimala might have reached Mani, who is allegedly involved in procuring large quantities of temple antiques. As part of the probe, police also traced a phone number believed to be linked to the suspect.

After obtaining a search warrant from a court, the SIT team visited the office of a businessman in Dindigul. However, the individual claimed he was not D Mani but Subramaniam, also known as M S Mani, and said he was engaged in real estate and not the gold trade.

SIT sources said the traced phone number was being used by M S Mani, prompting investigators to conduct a detailed inquiry to determine whether D Mani and M S Mani are the same person. A notice has been issued to Subramaniam to appear for interrogation in Thiruvananthapuram.

The SIT is also searching for another suspect, Srikrishna, in Virudhunagar district of Tamil Nadu. Police said the involvement of Mani and his associate is yet to be established.

So far, nine persons, including two former presidents of the Travancore Devaswom Board, have been arrested in connection with two cases related to the loss of gold from the Dwarapalaka idols and the Sreekovil doorframes.

Kanpur school staff booked for harassing class two student

KANPUR

Four staff members of a private school in Kanpur have been booked for allegedly mentally harassing an eight-year-old Class 2 student after accusing him of stealing a pen, police said on Friday.

The case came to light when the child began showing signs of distress, including crying in his sleep and writing "Help" in his books and on the walls of his home, according to a complaint filed by his parents.

Following the complaint, an FIR was registered on December 23, 2025, against the school director Devraj Singh Rajawat, principal Anuprit Rawal, and teachers Sangeeta Malik and Swatantra Agnihotri. The mother alleged that her son was falsely accused of theft and subjected to mental harassment.

She stated that her son was summoned to the school on December 12 for an incident that happened on November 28, a day he had been absent. The child reportedly became withdrawn, repeatedly said, "Ma'am, I didn't take the pen," and was coerced into recording a confession video. The school also refused to share CCTV footage and allegedly pressured the family to pay for the pen.

On December 29, 2025, HM Amit Shah will inaugurate Assam's biggest auditorium, Jyoti Bishnu Prekhyagriha

Amit Shah to inaugurate northeast's largest auditorium in Assam

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced that Union Home Minister Amit Shah will inaugurate the Jyoti Bishnu Prekhyagriha, the largest auditorium in the Northeast, during his visit on December 29, 2025. The facility has a seating capacity of 5,000, making it a major cultural addition to the state.

CM Sarma said the auditorium was completed in record time and named to honor two of Assam's cultural icons—Jyotiprasad Agarwala, the father of Assamese cinema, and Bishnu Prasad Rabha, a revolutionary artist, musician, and thinker. He described the project as a tribute to Assam's rich artistic legacy and a step forward in strengthening cultural spaces across the region.

The Jyoti Bishnu Prekhyagriha is designed to host large-scale cultural programs, performances, conferences, and public events. Officials expect it to become a landmark venue not only for Assam but for the entire Northeast, providing a dedicated platform for artists, cultural organizations, and institutions. The inauguration is part of HM Shah's official engagements in Assam, reflecting the Centre's focus on supporting the state's development and cultural infrastructure. CM Sarma emphasized that the auditorium will inspire future generations to connect with Assam's artistic traditions.

Constructed within a tight timeline, the facility aligns with Assam's broader plans to invest in cultural, educational, and social infrastructure alongside economic growth. The event is expected to attract artists, dignitaries, and cultural figures, highlighting Assam's commitment to preserving and promoting its cultural identity while building modern public spaces.

Delhi Court frames charges in attack on CM Rekha Gupta

A Delhi court has framed charges against two men accused of attacking Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, ordering in-camera trial and special directions for smooth proceedings

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday formally framed charges against two men accused of attacking Chief Minister Rekha Gupta during a public meeting in August 2025. The court also issued special directions to ensure the trial proceeds smoothly and securely.

Additional Sessions Judge Ekta Gauba Mann of Tis Hazari Courts recorded that both accused, Sakriya Rajeshbhai Khimjibhai and Tahsin Raza Rafiullah Shaikh, were produced from judicial custody. They have been charged under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for criminal conspiracy, attempt to murder, obstructing a public servant, and assaulting a public servant. An additional charge of causing hurt was framed against Sakriya. Both pleaded not guilty and sought trial.

Considering the Chief Minister's position as a public official and a woman, the court directed that her testimony be recorded in-camera to protect her privacy and avoid overcrowding. It ordered that whenever she appears as a witness, she will be called at 2:00 pm and her evidence will be recorded privately. The defense raised no objection. The court fixed the next hearing for prosecution evidence and directed that witnesses, including ASI Surender Kumar, Naresh Jain, and Raghunandan Singh, be summoned.

In a separate order, the court addressed a plea regarding Sakriya's deteriorating eyesight. The Jail Superintendent of Tihar Jail No. 4 was instructed to arrange an eye specialist's examination and provide suitable spectacles, with a compliance report due at the next hearing.

The charges stem from an alleged incident at the Chief Minister's Civil Lines camp office, where Sakriya reportedly breached security, pushed Gupta to the ground, and attempted to throttle her. CCTV footage, call records, and video exchanges between the accused are cited as evidence of a planned conspiracy. The matter has been renotified for further proceedings on February 28, 2026.

Siliguri hotels suspend stays for Bangladeshi nationals

KOLKATA

Hoteliers in Siliguri have temporarily stopped providing accommodation to Bangladeshi nationals due to rising regional tensions. The Greater Siliguri Hoteliers Welfare Association announced the decision, citing recent incidents such as alleged disrespect to the Indian flag and provocative remarks by some Bangladeshi citizens. The move is intended to ensure the safety of guests and hotel staff in this sensitive border region.

Around 180 member hotels will enforce the restriction, while nearly 50 non-member hotels have voluntarily followed suit. Siliguri, a key gateway near the international border and the strategic Siliguri corridor, regularly hosts Bangladeshi tourists, students, and medical visitors. The association said the decision will be reviewed periodically. Meanwhile, hotel owners in Malda district are also considering similar temporary restrictions to maintain security and social harmony.

Cong leader booked for sharing AI image Kerala CM

KOZHIKODE

A case has been registered against Congress leader N Subarahmanian for allegedly sharing an AI-generated image of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan with Unnikrishnan Potty, an accused in the Sabarimala gold smuggling case. Subarahmanian, a member of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) Political Affairs Committee, reportedly shared the image on social media with a caption questioning the Chief Minister's alleged association with Potty. Police said initial checks confirmed that the photograph was created using artificial intelligence. The FIR was filed by Chevayoor police under Section 192 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which deals with provocation likely to cause a riot, and Section 120(o) of the Kerala Police Act for causing annoyance through communication.

Authorities are also tracing other users who circulated similar AI-generated images and are working to identify the origin of the manipulated photograph. Officials emphasized that spreading such false content could have serious legal consequences. Meanwhile, the CPI(M) clarified on Thursday that the image circulating online was completely fabricated using AI and does not reflect reality. Party sources urged people not to share misleading content that could create unrest or tarnish reputations.

This incident highlights the challenges authorities face in tackling misinformation and AI-generated content, especially when it involves political figures. The investigation is ongoing, and police continue efforts to hold responsible parties accountable under the law.

Sachin Pilot blames government for Aravalli Hills damage

JAIPUR

Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Friday accused the government of failing to protect the ecologically sensitive Aravalli hills, warning that continued inaction could cause irreversible environmental damage.

Pilot said, "People across India are concerned about who is deliberately putting at risk the mountain range that has protected millions for generations. More than 90% of the Aravalli region will fall outside protection due to the government's definition. What is being done to stop illegal mining happening right under its nose? The government seems helpless or lacks intent."

Pilot criticized the authorities for not approaching the Supreme Court to redefine the Aravalli hills' boundaries, calling it a failure despite being a "four-engine government." He stressed that the situation threatens the ecological balance and long-term sustainability of the region.

The controversy follows the Supreme Court's November 20, 2025, judgment in the TN Godavarman Thirumulpad vs. Union of India case. The court accepted the government's definition of the hills, stating that elevations under 100 metres are not covered by mining restrictions. The Court also approved recommendations for sustainable mining and measures to prevent illegal activity.

The Union Environment Ministry has written to Haryana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat officials, directing a ban on new mining leases and strict regulation of ongoing operations until the Management Plan for Sustainable Mining is finalized. It has also requested the Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education to identify prohibited zones and assess ecological carrying capacity.

The Aravalli range, stretching 670 kilometres from Delhi through Haryana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat, is India's oldest fold-mountain belt, with its highest peak, Guru Shikhar, reaching 1,722 metres in Mount Abu, Rajasthan.

Delhi HC protects Pawan Kalyan's personality rights

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has granted an ad-interim injunction in favor of actor and Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, restraining online marketplaces, AI platforms, websites, and unidentified entities from misusing his name, image, voice, likeness, or other personality attributes for commercial purposes.

A single-judge Bench of Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora passed the ex parte order on a suit filed by Kalyan seeking protection against unauthorized merchandise, impersonation, deepfakes, AI-generated content, and misleading online listings.

The court recognized Kalyan's celebrity status, noting that his nearly three-decade-long career in Telugu cinema and public life has given him substantial commercial brand value linked to his persona. Justice Arora observed that the unauthorized use of Kalyan's attributes could cause irreparable injury.

The court restrained the identified defendants and "John Doe" entities from using Kalyan's name, image, voice, or likeness for commercial gain, including through AI, generative AI, or deepfakes, without consent. E-commerce platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, and Meesho were directed to delist infringing products and provide KYC details of sellers. Websites misusing his identity were ordered to remove offending content within a week. AI platforms were also restrained from generating content that violated Kalyan's rights.

The order allowed certain fan pages on Instagram to continue, provided they clearly state they are fan accounts. Google and Meta were directed to share IP and subscriber details for further identification of anonymous violators.

The case is scheduled before the Joint Registrar on February 9, 2026, with the next hearing set for May 12, 2026 to complete pleadings.

LPG ACCESS GROWTH

PMUY LPG connections reach 10.35 cr beneficiaries

NEW DELHI

The number of people receiving subsidized LPG under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) reached 10.35 crore as of December 1, 2025, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas announced on Friday. The scheme aims to provide clean cooking fuel to all households, especially those below the poverty line.

To make LPG affordable, PMUY offers a subsidy of Rs 300 per 14.2 kg cylinder for up to nine refills each year. This support has steadily increased LPG usage, with average per capita refills rising from three in 2019–20 to 4.47 in 2024–25, and a projected 4.85 refills in 2025–26. The government approved 25 lakh additional LPG connections in 2025–26 to meet pending demand. Biometric authentication through Aadhaar now covers 71% of PMUY consumers and 62% of non-PMUY users, improving transparency and subsidy targeting.

Consumer safety was strengthened through the nationwide Basic Safety Check campaign, which completed over 12.12 crore inspections and replaced 4.65 crore LPG hoses at discounted rates. Retail infrastructure also improved, with more than 90,000 outlets enabled for digital payments via 2.71 lakh POS terminals.

Electric mobility grew under the FAME-II scheme, with 8,932 EV charging stations installed, and Oil Marketing Companies adding 18,500 more. Integrated energy stations, biofuels, and city gas distribution expanded, while natural gas pipelines grew to 25,429 km.

Through these initiatives, the Ministry advanced clean energy, safety, and accessibility, supporting India's transition to a sustainable and inclusive energy future during 2025.

QUICK READ

Russia jails ex-diplomat for spying U.S.

MOSCOW

A Moscow court sentenced former Russian foreign ministry employee Arseniy Konovalov to 12 years in prison for passing state secrets to U.S. intelligence, according to the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB). Konovalov, who was on a long-term foreign assignment in the United States, allegedly shared confidential information he accessed during his official duties in exchange for money. The FSB reported that the breach involved highly sensitive material, posing serious national security risks. Authorities say the sentence underscores Russia's strict stance on espionage and its commitment to protecting state secrets from foreign intelligence services.

Special Counsel seeks jail term for Yoon

SEOUL

South Korea's special counsel has requested a 10-year prison sentence for former President Yoon Suk Yeol over obstruction of justice and related charges linked to his December 2024 martial law declaration. The prosecution said Yoon obstructed investigators, violated Cabinet members' rights, distributed false press statements, and destroyed official records. They described his acts as "grave crimes" that harmed law and order and betrayed public trust. Separate sentences were suggested for each charge, totaling 10 years. The verdict for this trial is expected on January 16, while Yoon faces three other ongoing trials related to his failed martial law attempt.

Report exposes deep bias against Sindhis in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD

A report has highlighted "entrenched prejudice" against Sindhis in Pakistan, rooted in both society and state institutions. Podcaster and writer Shehzad Ghias Shaikh faces threats after exposing this bias, particularly in Karachi. Observers note that Sindhis have long been mocked in politics, media, and public life, from derogatory remarks by past leaders to attacks on cultural symbols like Ajrak. Historical patterns show systemic exclusion from top positions and public offices. Experts say state and societal discrimination persists, silencing dissent.

8 killed and 18 injured in terrorist explosion at mosque

Syrian security forces responded to the explosion, aiding victims, while health officials confirmed casualties and several critically injured

HOMS

At least eight people were killed and 18 others injured after a powerful explosion struck a mosque in Syria's Homs city on Friday, state media reported. The blast occurred at the Imam Ali Bin Abi Talib Mosque in the Wadi al-Dhahab neighborhood, a predominantly Alawite area, a minority community in the country.

Syrian security forces rushed to the site after the explosion, inspecting the damage and helping victims. According to the Syrian state news agency SANA, officials from the health ministry confirmed the casualties and reported that several of the injured were in critical condition.

The interior ministry condemned the incident as a "terrorist explosion," saying the mosque was deliberately targeted during Friday prayers. The attack comes amid ongoing security challenges in the region and adds to the fears of minority communities.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for the bombing. Authorities are investigating the incident, examining the site for evidence, and questioning witnesses to identify the perpetrators.

Residents expressed shock and grief over the attack, with many describing the mosque as a central place of worship and community gathering. Local authorities called for calm and assured the public that heightened security measures would be implemented to prevent further attacks.

The deadly blast highlights the continuing threat of violence in areas affected by conflict, and authorities urged people to remain vigilant while maintaining daily routines.

Putin opens backchannel talks on Ukraine peace proposals

MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin has opened channels of communication with the United States following Washington's proposals for a potential Ukrainian peace deal. The Kremlin confirmed that Putin's foreign policy aide, Yuri Ushakov, spoke by phone with members of President Donald Trump's administration to discuss the documents.

The proposals were physically delivered to Moscow over the weekend by Putin's envoy Kirill Dmitriev, who had met U.S. officials in Miami. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the documents are under careful review, and the dialogue between Russia and the United States will continue.

"The information was analysed, and on behalf of President Putin, contact took place between representatives of the administrations of Russia and the United States," Peskov said, adding that public comments on the proposals could affect ongoing negotiations.

Russian media reports suggest that Putin has indicated a willingness to consider territorial swaps involving areas currently under Russian control, while maintaining that the entire Donbas region remains a key objective. Peskov did not confirm these reports but noted that the discussions were addressed "in general" during the meeting with Russian business leaders.

The diplomatic exchange comes as tensions remain high in Ukraine, where Russia and Ukraine have been engaged in conflict for more than two years. Analysts see the move as a potential signal from Moscow that it is open to dialogue, though core territorial demands are unlikely to be compromised.

The Kremlin's careful language suggests that while Russia is willing to keep communication channels open, any agreement will need to protect what it considers key strategic interests, particularly in eastern Ukraine.

> Kremlin confirmed fresh communication with the US after Washington shared peace proposals, signalling Moscow's willingness for dialogue while firmly guarding key territorial interests.

Cambodia accuses Thai jets of bombing border village

PHNOM PENH

Cambodian authorities on Friday accused Thai fighter jets of bombing a border village in Banteay Meanchey province, causing widespread damage to homes and public infrastructure. Lt. Gen. Maly Socheata, spokesperson for the Cambodian Defence Ministry, said up to 40 bombs were dropped in Chok Chey village, while Thai artillery also hit residential areas in nearby Poipet Municipality.The accusations come amid ongoing tensions over long-standing territorial disputes between Cambodia and Thailand, which date back to the colonial era. Clashes along the border reignited in late May, despite a joint peace declaration signed by the two countries at the ASEAN summit in Malaysia last October.

On Thursday, Thai officials reported that border negotiations had entered a second day and that overall skirmishes were showing a downward trend. Around 30 Cambodian delegates attended the Thai-Cambodian General Border Committee meeting, along with Malaysian members of the ASEAN observer team. The Thai military said exchanges of fire remained confined to localized areas. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in a phone call with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet, emphasized the importance of fully implementing the Kuala Lumpur Peace Accords.

Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul hinted at parliamentary dissolution and plans proactive Internal Security operations targeting cybercrime, drugs, and environmental hazards by 2026

Former Thai PM Abhisit joins election race

BANGKOK

Thailand's Democrat Party announced on Friday that former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva will lead its bid in the upcoming general election, with two other party leaders also in the running. The announcement was made through a campaign video released on social media.

Abhisit, who served as Thailand's Prime Minister from 2008 to 2011, is joined by former Finance Minister Korn Chatikavanij and deputy party leader Karndee Leopairote as the party's three prime ministerial candidates. In the video, Abhisit stressed the need to fight poverty through clean governance and greater transparency across all sectors. After losing the 2019 general election, Abhisit resigned from party leadership and left the Democrat Party in 2023. He made a political comeback in October 2025, rejoining the party and regaining leadership.Thailand is scheduled to hold elections for the new House of Representatives on February 8, 2026. Political parties must submit their prime ministerial candidates between December 28 and 31, with a maximum of three nominees per party.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul has indicated a possible parliamentary dissolution, stating on December 11 that he plans to "return power to the people." Earlier, he outlined plans for the country's Internal Security Operations Command to shift to proactive operations by 2026, focusing on cybercrime, drug trafficking, and environmental hazards.

Anutin also instructed security forces to upgrade intelligence capabilities to tackle online scams, call-center gangs, and misinformation, aiming to address root causes of public hardship. These moves signal Thailand's government is preparing both politically and administratively for the upcoming elections.

South Korea may allow public to use North Korea newspaper

SEOUL

South Korea's Unification Ministry said Friday that it is reviewing measures to allow public access to North Korea's main newspaper, the Rodong Sinmun, along with other North Korean materials. Currently, such content is classified as "special materials" due to concerns over propaganda and promotion of the North's ruling party.

President Lee Jae Myung raised concerns about the ban during a policy briefing last week, stating it treats the public as if they are "susceptible to North Korean agitation." Following his remarks, the ministry, the National Intelligence Service (NIS), and other government agencies held discussions on potentially reclassifying the Rodong Sinmun as "general materials," allowing wider access.

Deputy spokesperson Chang Yoon-jeong said, "We are considering measures to allow public access to North Korean materials in a more open manner." The NIS has also indicated it is "positively" reviewing steps to facilitate inter-Korean exchanges and ensure the public's right to know.

At present, the newspaper can only be read at designated facilities, such as the ministry's North Korea information center, after verification of identity and purpose. Reclassifying it would enable South Koreans to access printed editions more freely, though online access to the newspaper's website would remain blocked.

The government currently restricts online access to around 60 North Korean websites under the Information and Communications Network Act, which allows limits on content related to activities banned under the National Security Law. The NIS has said it will also review whether restrictions on these websites can be eased.

If approved, this move would mark a significant shift in Seoul's approach to North Korean information, balancing national security concerns with the public's right to information.

PTI launches major street protest in Lahore

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Friday announced a major street protest in Lahore, starting with a public event at Liberty Roundabout to welcome Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi. The move follows instructions from PTI founder Imran Khan, currently serving a prison sentence.

PTI Punjab chief organiser Aliya Hamza Malik urged the party's ticket-holders, workers, lawyers, and office-bearers in Lahore to join the protest. She said the gathering aims to "restore constitution, law, and democracy in the country" and described it as a "historic moment" to transform the main boulevard into a march for Imran Khan's release.

Imran Khan has been in Adiala jail, Rawalpindi, since August 2023, serving a 14-year sentence in a £190 million corruption case. He also faces pending trials under the Anti-Terrorism Act linked to protests held on May 9, 2023. His wife, Bushra Bibi, is serving a seven-year sentence in the same case.

The protests follow a recent court verdict in the Toshakhana-II case, in which Imran Khan and his wife were sentenced to 17 years in prison. The case revolves around the purchase of an expensive jewellery set, gifted to Khan by the Saudi Crown Prince in May 2021, at a nominal price.

The verdict was delivered by Judge Shahrukh Arjumand of the Federal Investigation Agency's special court during proceedings at Adiala jail. Under the ruling, Imran Khan received 10 years of rigorous imprisonment under multiple sections of the Pakistan Penal Code and seven years under the Prevention of Corruption Act. Last week, he called for nationwide protests and vowed to challenge the Toshakhana-II verdict in the Islamabad High Court.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	8	3		6		1		4
	1		3		2		8	
4		6		8	5	9		2
1		2	6		8		7	3
	4	7		2		8		
3		8		7		2		5
	2		9		7	3		8
8		1		3				
7		5	8		4	6		9

8	2	6	4	1	3	5	9	7
9	1	5	2	6	7	4	8	3
7	3	4	5	8	9	1	2	6
4	7	2	8	9	5	3	6	1
5	9	1	3	4	6	2	7	8
3	6	8	7	2	1	9	5	4
2	5	7	1	3	8	6	4	9
1	8	9	6	5	4	7	3	2
6	4	3	9	7	2	8	1	5

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

DIPLOMATIC BRIDGES STRENGTHENED

Indian envoy meets Japan Chief Cabinet Secretary

TOKYO

India's Ambassador-designate to Japan, Nagma Mallick, held a key meeting with Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Kihara Minoru on Friday to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations between the two nations. The talks focused on advancing cooperation following the recent summit between Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Sanae Takaichi in Johannesburg.

During the G20 Summit on November 23, the two leaders had discussed expanding collaboration in areas such as innovation, defence, talent mobility, and trade. The meeting between Mallick and Kihara was aimed at following up on these discussions and translating them into concrete initiatives.

Earlier this month, Mallick met several top Japanese officials to deepen strategic ties. On December 22, she held talks with Japan's State Minister for Disaster Management, Akama Jiro, to explore cooperation on disaster risk reduction and resilience. On December 18, she met Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy, Kiuchi Minoru, to review aspects of the Special Strategic and Global Partnership between India and Japan.

In addition, Mallick met Yasutoshi Nishimura, Chairman of the Japan-India Parliamentary Friendship Group, and Fukushiro Nukaga, Speaker of Japan's House of Representatives, to discuss mutual interests and strengthen parliamentary ties.

The Indian Embassy in Japan emphasized that these meetings reflect the commitment of both countries to deepen their partnership across multiple sectors, enhance trade, and promote people-to-people exchanges. Ambassador Mallick's engagements aim to build on the momentum created by the Prime Ministers' recent discussions and further consolidate the India-Japan strategic relationship.

QUICK READ

India's manufacturing growth boosted by key policies

BENGALURU

India's manufacturing sector is seeing rapid growth thanks to government initiatives. Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes have encouraged local production and exports, with Rs 14,065 crore invested in mobile phones and components, and Rs 846 crore in IT hardware by October 2025. The Semicon India Programme has approved 10 units, attracting Rs 1.6 lakh crore in investments for advanced semiconductor and memory packaging. Experts say India is shifting from volume-driven production to high-value, innovation-focused manufacturing, emphasizing joint research, technology transfer, and local component use. These steps aim to integrate India further into global value chains and boost economic growth.

LG battery deal with U.S. firm cancelled

SEOUL

South Korean battery maker LG Energy Solution has canceled its $2.69 billion supply deal with U.S. company Freudenberg Battery Power System, after the American firm exited the battery business. Signed in 2024, the agreement had already seen $110 million implemented. This follows LG's earlier cancellation of a $7.2 billion Ford contract, totaling $13.5 trillion in terminated deals this month, half of last year's sales. LG says the cancellations will have minimal financial impact as no major investments were made. The company reported a 34.1% rise in third-quarter operating profit, led by U.S. energy storage system sales.

RRTS corridors spark high property investment interest

NEW DELHI

India's Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) is boosting real estate interest along its corridors. A report by Knight Frank India shows 66% of current RRTS users are eager to invest in property near these routes. Improved connectivity is linked to better economic opportunities, with visible infrastructure raising confidence by over 2.25 times. Commercial activity and active real estate development further drive investment intent. Around 38% of respondents are open to moving away from city centers if social infrastructure is available. The Delhi–Ghaziabad–Meerut corridor, costing over Rs 30,000 crore, aims to reduce travel time under an hour.

New BIS standard aims for safer incense products: Joshi

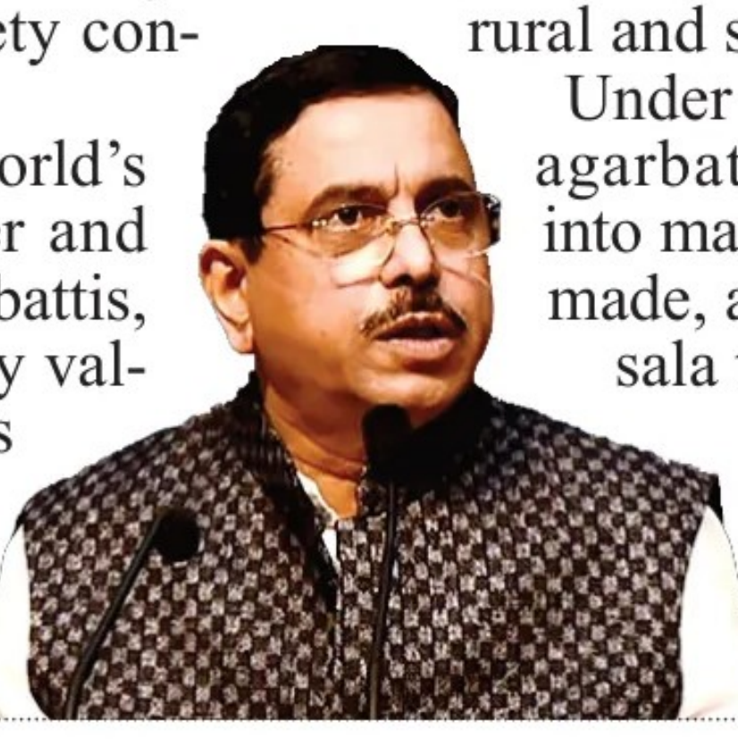
The new IS 19412:2025 bans harmful insecticidal chemicals and synthetic fragrances, aligning with global safety restrictions

NEW DELHI

The Union Government on Friday released a new quality standard for incense sticks, or agarbattis, to improve consumer safety, indoor air quality, and environmental protection. The standard was issued by the Bureau of Indian Standards and unveiled by Union Consumer Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi during National Consumer Day celebrations.

The new specification, titled IS 19412:2025, clearly bans the use of certain insecticidal chemicals and synthetic fragrance substances that may harm human health or pollute indoor spaces. Officials said several of these chemicals are already restricted or banned in many countries due to safety concerns.

India is the world's largest producer and exporter of agarbattis, with the industry valued at nearly Rs 8,000 crore each year. Indian incense sticks are exported to more than 150 countries, earning around Rs 1,200 crore annually. The sector provides employment to lakhs of people, especially women, artisans, and small entrepreneurs in rural and semi-urban areas.



Under the new standard, agarbattis are classified into machine-made, handmade, and traditional masala types.

Clear guidelines have been laid down for raw materials, fragrance quality, burning performance, and chemical content to ensure safer and consistent products.

Products meeting these requirements will be allowed to carry the BIS Standard Mark, helping buyers make informed choices.

The government said the move will boost consumer confidence, encourage responsible manufacturing, protect traditional livelihoods, and improve global market access worldwide markets.

Central govt releases major rural grants for states

NEW DELHI

The Union Government has released over Rs 723 crore as grants to strengthen rural local bodies in Rajasthan and Jharkhand under the 15th Finance Commission. The funds are part of the first instalment of untied grants for the financial year 2025–26, according to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. Rajasthan received Rs 303.04 crore as the first instalment for 2025–26. This amount will benefit 24 district panchayats, 339 block panchayats, and 3,857 gram panchayats across the state. In addition, Rs 145.24 crore, which was earlier withheld from the first and second instalments of 2024–25, has also been released to eligible rural bodies after meeting required conditions.

Jharkhand has been allotted Rs 275.12 crore as the first instalment of untied grants for 2024–25. The funds will be distributed among 24 district panchayats, 253 block panchayats, and 4,342 gram panchayats in the state.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj, along with the Ministry of Jal Shakti, recommends these grants, which are then released by the Ministry of Finance. The grants are provided in two instalments each financial year.

Untied grants can be used by panchayats for local development needs listed under the Eleventh Schedule, excluding salaries and office expenses. Tied grants are meant for sanitation, maintaining open defecation-free status, waste management, drinking water supply, rainwater harvesting, and water recycling.

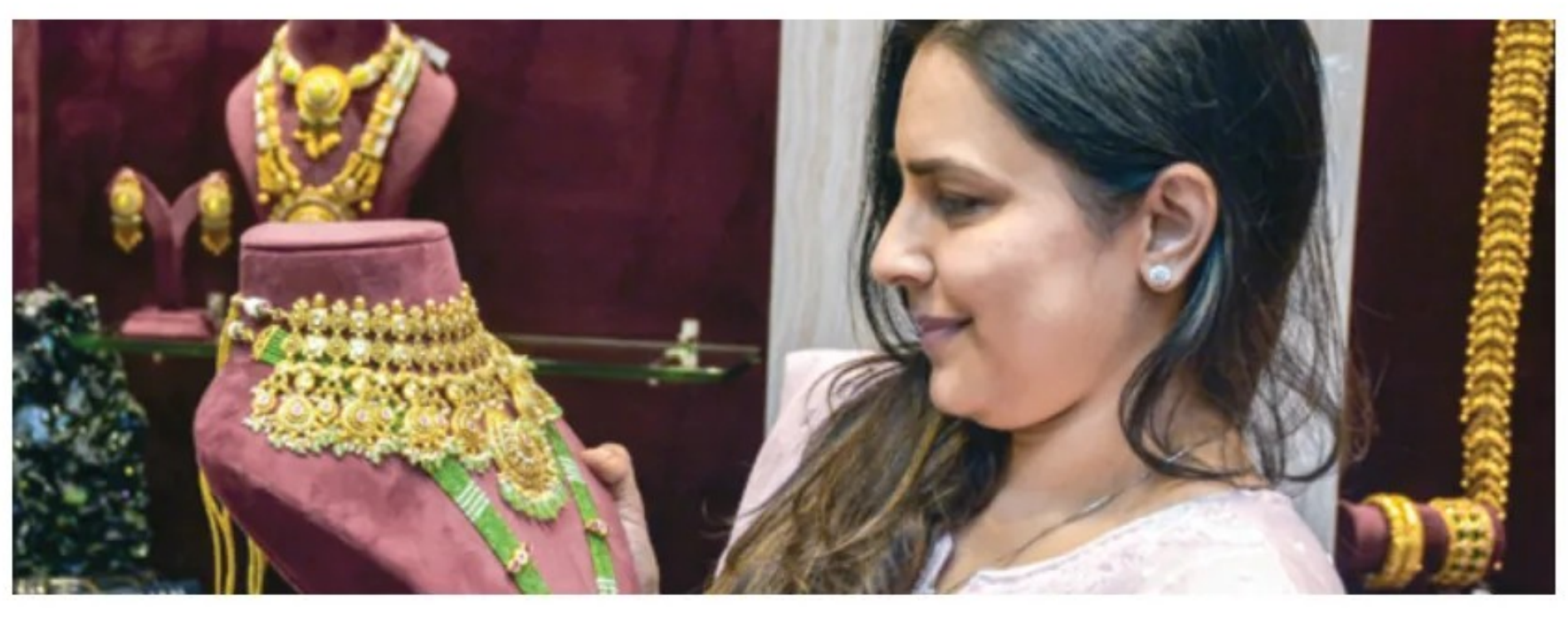
Earlier this year, the Centre released over Rs 223 crore for Assam and Rs 444.38 crore for Odisha. The Ministry has also introduced digital initiatives like SabhaSaar, SVAMITVA, eGramSwaraj, and Gram Manchitra to improve transparency, planning, and citizen participation in rural governance.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Ministry of Jal Shakti recommend grants, which the Ministry of Finance releases in two instalments each financial year.

Sovereign Gold Bonds are government-backed, safe alternatives to physical gold, offering steady returns and capital gains tax exemption

RBI announces sovereign gold bond redemption price

NEW DELHI



The Reserve Bank of India has announced the premature redemption price for the Sovereign Gold Bond 2017-18 Series XIII, which became eligible for early exit on Friday. The bond, issued on December 26, 2017, can now be redeemed at Rs 13,563 per gram, giving investors a very strong return over eight years.

Although Sovereign Gold Bonds have a total maturity period of eight years, investors are allowed to opt for premature redemption after completing five years. This particular series was originally issued at Rs 2,866 per gram, without any discount. Based on the current redemption price, investors have earned an absolute simple return of nearly 382 percent, apart from regular interest. In addition to price appreciation, the bond also paid a fixed interest of 2.5 percent per year, credited twice annually. This interest component further improved the overall yield for investors. The final redemption price is calculated using the average closing price of gold of 999 purity over the previous three working days.

Sovereign Gold Bonds are government-backed securities issued in grams of gold and serve as a safe alternative to holding physical gold. They offer safety, steady returns, and protection from storage risks. Investors who hold these bonds until maturity or the permitted redemption date also enjoy exemption from capital gains tax.

Gold prices have risen sharply in recent years due to global uncertainties, strong central bank buying, geopolitical tensions, and expectations of interest rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve. Experts believe gold prices may continue to rise as economic risks and global instability remain. Market analysts advise investors to review financial goals before choosing premature redemption options.

Small business credit surges 16 percent in India

NEW DELHI

India's small business credit reached Rs 46 lakh crore in 2025, marking a 16.2 percent increase compared to the previous year, according to a report released on Friday. The rise is attributed to policy measures and government credit schemes supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

The report by CRIF High Mark and SIDBI showed that active loan accounts grew 11.8 percent to 7.3 crore. Among businesses with credit exposure up to Rs 5 crore, 23.3 percent of borrowers were new to formal credit, while 12 percent were first-time enterprise borrowers, reflecting gradual formalisation of the sector.

Sole proprietors continue to dominate the small business credit ecosystem, accounting for nearly 80 percent of credit and almost 90 percent of borrowers. They posted the fastest growth at 20 percent, driven largely by loans against property. Working capital loans made up 57 percent of total credit, with term loans supporting capital expenditure.

Private banks lead enterprise lending, followed closely by public sector banks. Non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) have increased their share, especially among sole proprietors, now accounting for over 41 percent of lending in this segment. Unsecured lending grew by 31 percent year-on-year despite concerns around stress.

Dutch NGO Sues Tata Steel over environmental damage

MUMBAI

Tata Steel has informed stock exchanges that a Dutch nonprofit organisation has filed a collective legal claim against its Netherlands-based subsidiaries, alleging environmental and health damage caused by industrial emissions.

The organisation, Stichting Frisse Wind.nu (SFW), served a writ of summons on December 19 to Tata Steel Nederland B.V. and Tata Steel IJmuiden B.V., collectively known as TSN. The case has been filed at the District Court of North Holland in Haarlem under the Dutch Act on Collective Settlement of Mass Claims (WAMCA).

SFW claims to represent residents living near Tata Steel's operations in Velsen-Noord. The organisation alleges that emissions of harmful substances from the facilities have caused environmental damage and negatively affected the health and well-being of local residents. The claim also mentions financial losses suffered by the affected communities.

In its filing, Tata Steel said that TSN is fully prepared to defend itself. The company noted that SFW faces challenges regarding the admissibility of the case and the substance of the claims. While TSN is yet to receive the complete set of documents and evidence that SFW will rely on, Tata Steel stated it has already identified strong grounds for defence.

The company reiterated that it will contest the allegations and take all necessary legal steps to protect its interests.

Logistics costs to fall, rail freight rises

NEW DELHI

India's logistics costs are expected to fall sharply over the next decade, bringing major relief to businesses and exporters. A new report has projected that logistics costs will drop to seven to eight per cent of the country's GDP by 2035, compared to the current level of 13 to 14 per cent. The report said this reduction will help India match global standards and improve its competitiveness in international trade.

It noted strong growth in investments, with the logistics sector recording 48 deals in 2025, marking a 37 per cent rise compared to last year. Private equity and venture capital investments touched 659 million dollars, largely focused on technology driven and asset light business models.

Major policy reforms, faster infrastructure development, and increased use of digital systems have transformed the transportation and logistics sector in 2025. Experts said these changes are creating a more connected and efficient supply chain network across the country.

A key shift highlighted in the report is the change in freight movement patterns. Road transport, which handled 72 per cent of freight in 2014, is expected to drop to nearly 50 per cent by 2035. At the same time, the railways' share is likely to rise to 40 per cent, supported by dedicated freight corridors.

The report added that investments in multimodal logistics parks, GST reforms, and digital platforms are reshaping freight movement. The Unified Logistics Interface Platform now links multiple ministries and enables real time data sharing.

Five multimodal logistics parks in major cities are nearing completion, strengthening India's plan to become a modern, efficient, and globally competitive logistics hub nationwide.

IMF LIFELINE RENEWED

Pakistan secures 25th IMF bailout again

NEW DELHI

Pakistan has once again turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for financial support, receiving its 25th bailout despite repeatedly failing to fully follow loan conditions. The latest assistance includes a 7 billion dollar Extended Fund Facility spread over 37 months, along with an additional 1.4 billion dollar Resilience and Sustainability Fund.

Under the agreement reached in October, Pakistan will initially receive 1 billion dollars from the Extended Fund Facility and 200 million dollars from the sustainability fund. With this, total disbursements under the two programs will reach around 3.3 billion dollars. While the funds offer short-term relief to the struggling economy, experts say they highlight Pakistan's long-standing dependence on external loans.

The IMF programs aim to bring economic stability through strict financial discipline, reduction of deficits, higher revenue collection, and subsidy reforms. However, successive governments in Pakistan have failed to carry out deep structural reforms. Only about two per cent of the population pays income tax, placing a heavy burden on salaried employees and consumers, while powerful sectors like agriculture, real estate, and retail remain largely untaxed. An IMF report released in November 2025 pointed to serious corruption issues and weak budget control. It noted that many approved projects do not receive proper funding, leading to delays and rising costs. In 2024–25 alone, expenditure overruns touched Rs 9.4 trillion, five times higher than the previous year.

The IMF has repeatedly urged transparency, fair taxation, and action against misuse of public funds. However, progress has been slow. Analysts say the real challenge is not the IMF's conditions, but the lack of political will to reform. Until tough decisions are taken, Pakistan's cycle of debt and bailouts is likely to continue.

Gujarat to showcase new Medical Device Park investments

GANDHINAGAR

GIDC
GUJARAT INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
GIDC
NAGALPAR
INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

Gujarat is set to highlight its growing healthcare manufacturing potential with the development of a new Medical Device Park at Nagalpar in Rajkot district. The Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) plans to create a fully integrated ecosystem supporting research, production, quality testing, and exports under one roof.

The upcoming Vibrant Gujarat Regional Conference (VGRC) in Rajkot, scheduled for January 2026, will showcase the park to global investors, industry leaders, and government officials. The conference will also highlight opportunities in engineering, logistics, agriculture, and food processing across the Kutch and Saurashtra regions.

Spread over 336 acres, the Nagalpar Medical Device Park is designed to cover the entire value chain, from research and development to production, certification, and international market access. The project aims to position Gujarat as a leading destination for medical device manufacturing in India.

The park benefits from strong logistical connectivity. It is located 125 km from Pipavav Port, 198 km from Kandla Port, and 243 km from Mundra Port. Rajkot International Airport connects the region to major cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru, while National Highway-27, just 9 km away, ensures seamless movement of goods and raw materials.

Modern infrastructure will include plug-and-play facilities, a 3.5 million litre-per-day water supply, solid waste management, a sewage treatment plant, and a dedicated 66 KV power substation. A common warehouse and logistics centre will enhance supply chain efficiency and reduce operational costs for businesses operating in the park.The initiative reflects Gujarat's strategic focus on high-value manufacturing and reinforces the state's reputation as an investment-friendly destination. By developing the Nagalpar Medical Device Park, the state aims to strengthen its position in India's fast-growing medical device sector and attract global investments.

Unseen Dangers on India's Roads :

THE CRISIS OF BUS SAFETY

In the early hours of a chilly December morning in 2025, a luxury sleeper bus traveling from Bengaluru to Gokarna in Karnataka collided with a speeding container truck on National Highway 48 near Hiriyur in Chitradurga district. The impact was catastrophic: the bus erupted into flames, trapping passengers inside. At least nine people perished, many charred beyond recognition, including a five-year-old girl and the bus driver who later succumbed to injuries. More than 20 others were injured, some critically, as survivors recounted scenes of panic—screams echoing through the smoke-filled cabin, desperate attempts to smash windows, and delayed rescue efforts. This tragedy, unfolding just days before the new year, wasn't an isolated incident. It joined a grim tally of bus accidents across India, where roads claim over 170,000 lives annually, with buses involved in a significant portion. In Karnataka alone, similar fires and crashes have claimed dozens in recent months, highlighting a systemic failure in one of the world's most populous nations. As families mourn and investigations begin, questions linger: Why do these disasters keep happening? This feature delves into the hidden layers of bus safety in India, drawing from patterns in Karnataka and nationwide, to uncover the human stories behind the statistics.

Are School Bus Routes Really Safe?

School buses, symbols of routine safety, hide vulnerabilities in India.

Data from 2022 shows road accidents claimed thousands of young lives, with buses involved in a notable share.

In Karnataka, Bengaluru's congested roads amplify risks: a 2025 overturn near Madavara injured 30 children due to poor road conditions and traffic snarls.

Routes often traverse pothole-riddled paths, sharp turns, and high-traffic zones without dedicated lanes.

Analysis reveals patterns: urban areas see more minor crashes from congestion, while rural routes suffer fatal ones from bad infrastructure.

In a 2023 national report, children faced heightened risks from multiple exposures—walking to stops, boarding, and en route.

Karnataka's datasets highlight hotspots near schools with inadequate signage or speed bumps.

Drivers complain of chaotic traffic forcing unsafe maneuvers.

TO GAUGE SAFETY:

- Examine accident data: Over 38% of fatal injuries involve vulnerable road users like kids.
- Assess road conditions: Potholes and uneven surfaces cause 20% of bus mishaps.
- Traffic patterns: Peak school hours overlap with rush, increasing collision odds.
- Parents in Bengaluru push for audits, but without action, these routes remain roulette wheels for the young.

STOP
SCHOOL BUS

WHEN SAFETY RULES EXIST BUT AREN'T FOLLOWED

India boasts a robust framework of bus safety regulations, from the Automotive Industry Standards (AIS) codes mandating fire-resistant materials and emergency exits to rules on driver hours and vehicle inspections. Yet, the gap between paper and practice is vast. Enforcement is patchy, with regional transport offices overwhelmed and corruption allowing unfit buses to ply. In recent tragedies, buses lacked functional fire extinguishers or had blocked exits, violating AIS-119 for sleeper coaches. Operators often ignore mandates for speed governors or regular audits, prioritizing schedules over safety.

In Karnataka, state transport corporations face scrutiny after multiple incidents, but private players evade checks through bribes or lax oversight. Nationwide, while standards align with global norms, implementation falters due to understaffed authorities and weak penalties. A 2025 bus fire in Kurnool exposed how flammable interiors and absent speed limits turned minor collisions into infernos. Drivers, too, flout rules—overloading or skipping rest—under pressure from employers. This regulatory chasm isn't just bureaucratic; it's deadly. Families of victims in Chitradurga's recent crash demand answers: Why weren't protocols enforced? Bridging this divide calls for digital tracking, stricter fines, and public awareness, but until reforms bite, rules remain mere suggestions.

The Hidden Causes behind Bus Accidents

SAFETY FIRST !

Beyond the headlines of speeding or reckless driving lie subtler culprits that turn routine journeys into nightmares. Driver fatigue tops the list, often stemming from grueling schedules that push humans beyond limits. In one Maharashtra case from 2024, a bus veered off course after the driver, on duty for hours without rest, dozed off, leading to multiple fatalities. In Karnataka, similar exhaustion has been linked to crashes on highways like NH-48, where long-haul routes demand nonstop vigilance amid heavy traffic. Poor scheduling exacerbates this. Operators, chasing profits, cram in extra trips without adequate breaks, turning buses into rolling hazards. Maintenance shortcuts are another silent killer: worn-out brakes, faulty wiring, and illegal modifications like extra fuel tanks or flammable interiors invite disaster. Recent fires in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka revealed how substandard materials fed flames rapidly, blocking exits and trapping passengers. Outdated infrastructure compounds the risk—potholed roads, missing medians, and unlit stretches force evasive maneuvers that end in tragedy. In rural Karnataka, a pothole caused a school bus to overturn in 2025, killing two students and injuring 15. These factors aren't random; they're symptoms of a profit-driven industry skimping on.

Pointers to hidden causes include:

- Extended shifts without mandated rest periods, leading to micro-sleeps.
- Cost-cutting on vehicle upkeep, ignoring tire wear or electrical faults.
- Aging roads lacking modern safety features like rumble strips or barriers.
- Addressing these requires a shift from blame to systemic fixes, but until then, every bus ride carries unseen perils.

Technology vs Tragedy: Can Smart Systems Prevent Bus Crashes?

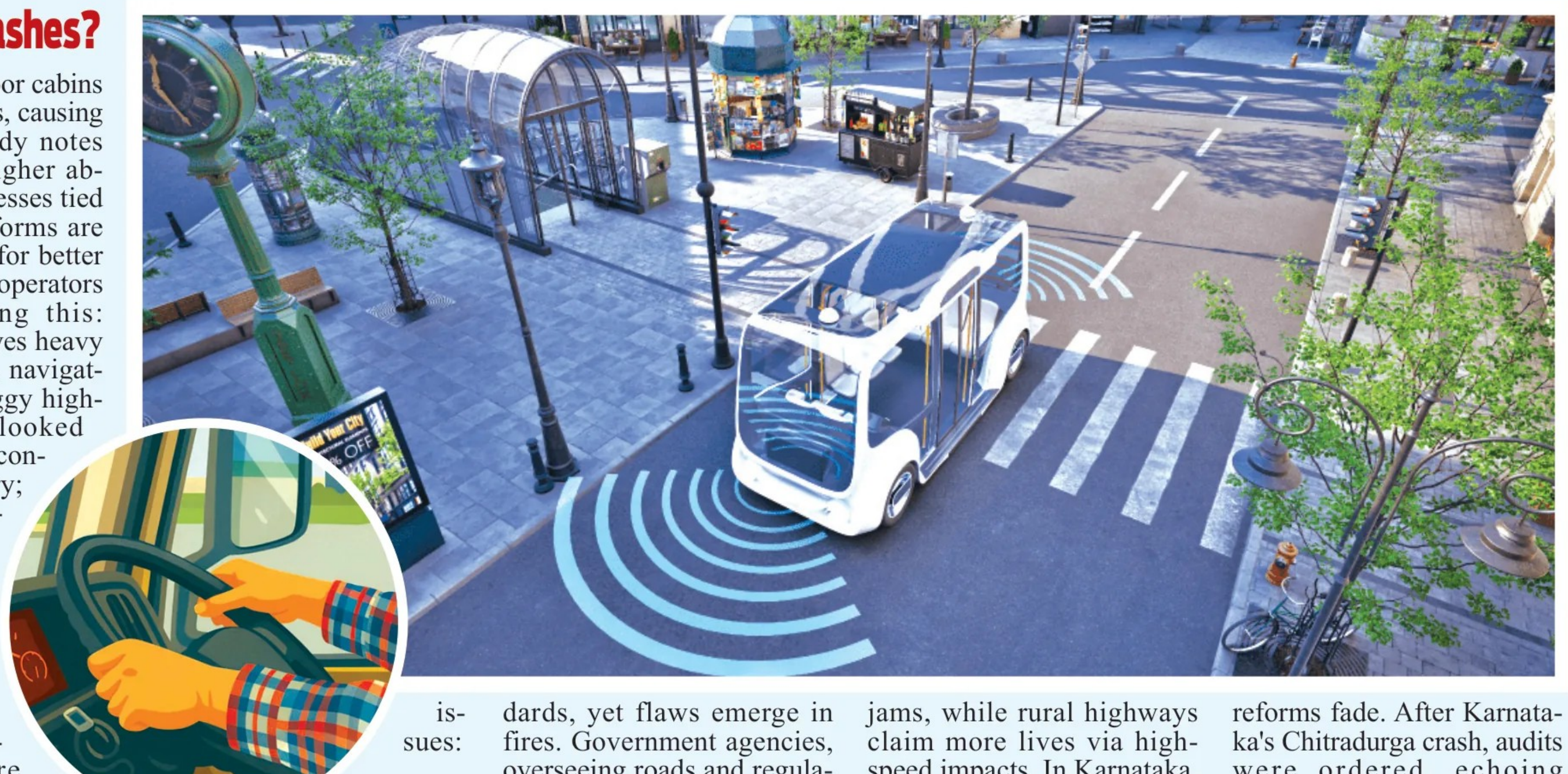
Innovation promises to outpace accidents, yet adoption lags in India. GPS tracking allows real-time monitoring, alerting operators to deviations or overspeeding. In Delhi's public fleet, AI dashcams reduced incidents by detecting fatigue and distractions. Collision warning systems use sensors for proximity alerts, while speed governors cap velocities, slashing crash rates by up to 40% in studies.

Success stories exist: AIS-140 compliant GPS in school buses mandates speed limits and panic buttons, saving lives in overspeed scenarios. Yet failures abound—cost barriers mean many private buses skip them, and poor maintenance renders tech useless. In Karnataka's recent fires, absent fire detection systems could have bought precious seconds. Why the gap? Initial expenses deter small operators, and enforcement is weak. Intelligent traffic systems in cities like Bengaluru show promise, but rural areas lag. Technology isn't a panacea; it needs integration with training. As tragedies mount, scaling these tools could tip the balance from tragedy to prevention.

Overworked Drivers, Overlooked Risks

Bus drivers are the unsung guardians of the road, but their conditions breed danger. Long shifts—often 12-16 hours—invite fatigue, a key factor in crashes. In India, drivers earn low wages, pushing them to overtime for survival, ignoring health. Pollution, noise, and vibration add physical tolls, leading to hypertension and stress.

In Karnataka, demands for paired drivers on long routes grow after fatigue-linked accidents. Low pay fosters turnover, with inexperienced hands taking wheels. Ergonomic issues like poor cabins exacerbate problems, causing distractions. A study notes bus drivers face higher absenteeism from illnesses tied to shifts. Labor reforms are sparse; unions call for better pay and hours, but operators resist. Humanizing this: Imagine a driver, eyes heavy after a double shift, navigating Karnataka's foggy highways—risks overlooked until too late. Fair conditions aren't luxury; they're safety essentials.



Deadly Roads: Why Certain Bus Routes See Repeated Accidents

Hotspots plague India's roads, where design flaws turn paths into traps. In Karnataka, NH-48's medians and lighting issues contributed to the Chitradurga fire. Nationwide, faulty DPRs and civil errors cause 55 accidents hourly.

Mapping reveals patterns: Sharp bends, absent barriers, and poor visibility recur in crashes. In rural Karnataka, unlit highways see night-time pile-ups, while urban stretches suffer from congestion. A 2025 analysis blames defective designs for lost lives. Why repeated? Delayed fixes and accountability gaps.

issues:

- Design flaws: Missing dividers allow head-on collisions.
- Lighting deficits: Night accidents spike in dim areas.
- Traffic flow: Overloaded routes without expansions breed chaos.

Who Is Accountable After a Bus Accident?

Post-crash, blame scatters: Drivers face immediate scrutiny for errors like speeding, but deeper accountability lies with companies skimping on maintenance. Manufacturers dodge if designs meet standards, yet flaws emerge in fires. Government agencies, overseeing roads and regulations, often escape due to weak enforcement. In Karnataka's 2025 incidents, calls for audits target transport firms and RTOs. Victims' families navigate courts, but delays frustrate.

Hit-and-run laws now mandate reporting, linking insurance, but gaps remain. True accountability demands transparent probes, holding all—from drivers to policymakers—responsible.

Rural vs Urban Bus Accidents: A Safety Divide

India's accidents split starkly: Urban areas see frequent but less fatal crashes from traffic jams, while rural highways claim more lives via high-speed impacts. In Karnataka, Bengaluru's congestion causes minor bus mishaps, but rural NH-48 sees deadly fires.

Causes differ: Cities battle rash driving and pedestrians; rural spots suffer poor roads and delayed aid, with 40% higher household deaths. Outcomes: Urban survivors access quick care; rural delays worsen fatalities. Bridging this divide needs tailored fixes—urban lanes, rural upgrades.

From Headlines to Change: Do Bus Accidents Actually Lead to Reform?

Tragedies spark outrage, but reforms fade. After Karnataka's Chitradurga crash, audits were ordered, echoing post-Kurnool promises. Nationwide, Good Samaritan laws eased aid, but enforcement wanes.

Examples: Post-2023 crashes, low-floor buses reduced Bengaluru fatalities, yet private sectors lag. Often, changes are forgotten amid bureaucracy. Sustained pressure—from public to policy—could turn headlines into lasting safety.

As India hurtles toward modernity, its roads lag, costing lives. The Chitradurga survivors' tales remind us: Safety isn't optional. With collective will, reform can pave safer paths.

Jokic's 56-point triple-double powers Nuggets win

Nikola Jokic delivered a historic Christmas night masterpiece as Denver edged Minnesota in an overtime thriller at home

DENVER

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15
DENVER
EDWARDS
5
MURRAY
27

In one of the most unforgettable games of the NBA season, Nikola Jokic produced a performance for the ages as the host Denver Nuggets rallied from a nine-point deficit in overtime to defeat the Minnesota Timberwolves 142–138. Jokic finished with a staggering 56 points, 16 rebounds, and 15 assists, redefining what dominance looks like on basketball's biggest holiday stage.

The 30-year-old Serbian center etched his name into NBA history by becoming the first player ever to record at least 55 points, 15 rebounds, and 15 assists in a single game. The scoring outburst also marked the third-highest point total ever recorded on Christmas Day, trailing only the legendary efforts of Bernard King, who scored 60 in 1984, and Wilt Chamberlain, who had 59 in 1961.

It was a crazy game, and it's a little bit late, so it's nice to finish off with a victory, Jokic said after the game during the national broadcast. The outing represented Jokic's 15th triple-double of the season, pushing his regular-season career total to 179, along with 21 more in the postseason—numbers that further cement his place among the game's all-time greats.

Denver also received strong support from Jamal Murray, who poured in 35 points and dished out 10 assists, helping the Nuggets snap a stretch in which they had dropped two of their previous three games.

Minnesota fought valiantly, led by Anthony Edwards, who scored 44 points, including 24 in the fourth quarter and overtime. However, Edwards was ejected after picking up his second technical foul with just 21 seconds remaining in the extra period, dealing a crucial blow to the Timberwolves' comeback hopes. Julius Randle added 32 points, Jaden McDaniels chipped in 21, and Rudy Gobert anchored the paint with 12 rebounds for Minnesota, which entered the night on a three-game winning streak.

Broncos Control Chiefs to Strengthen AFC Top-Seed Bid

MINNEAPOLIS

The Denver Broncos delivered a disciplined, time-of-possession masterclass, edging the host Kansas City Chiefs 20–13 in a Christmas night showdown that further reshaped the AFC playoff picture. Rookie quarterback Bo Nix capped Denver's decisive late drive with a one-yard touchdown pass to RJ Harvey with 1:45 remaining, sealing a win built on patience, precision, and ball control.

Nix completed 26 of 38 passes for 182 yards with one interception and added 42 rushing yards and a touchdown on nine carries. More importantly, Denver dominated possession for 39:28, limiting Kansas City to just 42 offensive plays and a mere 139 total yards. The victory marked Denver's 12th win in its last 13 games, pushing the Broncos to 13-3 and keeping them atop the AFC standings.

With the win, Denver maintained control of the No. 1 seed in the AFC playoff chase, staying ahead of the New England Patriots (12-3). The Broncos can clinch their first AFC West title since 2015 if the Los Angeles Chargers fall to the Houston Texans on Saturday.

Denver tightened its grip on the AFC's top seed while Minnesota surged past Detroit in pivotal Christmas night clashes.

Kansas City, meanwhile, played without star quarterback Patrick Mahomes, sidelined for the season with a knee injury, and backup Gardner Minshew. Making his first NFL start, Chris Oladokun completed 13 of 22 passes for 66 yards and a touchdown. Veteran tight end Travis Kelce caught five passes for 36 yards in what could have been his final home appearance for the Chiefs, who dropped to 6-10.

In Minneapolis, the Minnesota Vikings continued their late-season surge with a 23–10 win over the Detroit Lions, officially ending Detroit's playoff hopes. Jordan Addison broke the game open with a 65-yard rushing touchdown late in the fourth quarter, while Aaron Jones Sr. also found the end zone as Minnesota improved to 8-8 with its fourth consecutive victory.

With rookie quarterback J.J. McCarthy sidelined by a hairline fracture in his right hand, Max Brosmer stepped in and completed 9 of 16 passes for 51 yards. Detroit quarterback Jared Goff threw for 197 yards with one touchdown and two interceptions, a result that not only eliminated the Lions but also secured a postseason berth for the Green Bay Packers.

Defending champion LawConnect surged ahead early as 129 yachts launched into challenging seas in the iconic Sydney to Hobart race

LawConnect Leads Early as Sydney to Hobart Fleet Braces

SYDNEY

Defending line honours champion LawConnect took an early lead in the 80th edition of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race on Friday, as a fleet of 129 boats departed Sydney Harbour under overcast skies and headed into increasingly choppy waters of the South Pacific Ocean.

The race began promptly at 1 p.m. local time when the starting cannons fired, sending the supermaxis charging toward the harbour heads. LawConnect was first to round the opening turning mark, setting the early pace as it aims to claim line honours for the third consecutive year in one of the world's most prestigious offshore sailing events. Close behind was fellow favourite Master Lock Comanche, which remained firmly in contention as the leading boats cleared the harbour.

As the fleet pushed into open waters, crews prepared for testing conditions. Australia's weather bureau forecast strong southerly winds of up to 25 knots accompanied by swells reaching four metres shortly after leaving the protection of Sydney Harbour. While conditions are expected to ease slightly along the New South Wales and Tasmanian coasts over the weekend, the opening stages promised a demanding test of seamanship, endurance, and strategy.

The start of the race also carried a poignant moment of remembrance. As yachts passed the Bondi coastline, sailors paid tribute to the victims of the Bondi mass shooting that occurred nearly two weeks ago.

Venkatesh Iyer Unlikely to Start IPL Season for RCB: Anil Kumble

NEW DELHI

Former India captain Anil Kumble has indicated that all-rounder Venkatesh Iyer may not feature in Royal Challengers Bengaluru's playing eleven at the start of the upcoming Indian Premier League season, as the defending champions look to preserve stability within a well-settled squad.

RCB secured the Madhya Pradesh all-rounder for ₹7 crore at the recent IPL mini auction, a significant drop from the ₹23.75 crore Kolkata Knight Riders had paid to retain him last season. Despite the more modest price tag, Kumble believes the Bengaluru-based franchise is unlikely to rush Iyer straight into the XI, preferring to back the core group that delivered success previously. Speaking as a JioStar expert on the TATA IPL Auction Review show, Kumble explained that RCB's strategy is rooted firmly in continuity. Venkatesh Iyer will not be in the playing eleven at the start. You do not want to create doubt in a winning team, Kumble said, underlining the importance of maintaining clarity and confidence within a champion side.

Kumble further linked RCB's auction approach to their broader philosophy of nurturing and trusting young talent already within the squad. He pointed out that the franchise's decision not to aggressively pursue India leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi during the auction was a calculated move aimed at reinforcing faith in their existing players.

RCB's Andy Flower happy to acquire Venkatesh Iyer

BIRLA ESTATES
QATAR AIRWAYS
NOTHING
EBIXCASH

MUMBAI

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) head coach Andy Flower expressed his happiness at acquiring Venkatesh Iyer and praised his leadership qualities ahead of the IPL 2026. The mini-auction saw Royal Challengers Bengaluru bolster their championship squad by securing Venkatesh Iyer, Jacob Duffy and Mangesh Yadav. RCB snapped up Venkatesh Iyer for Rs 7 crore after Kolkata Knight Riders withdrew from the bidding, bringing an end to a far more restrained contest than last year, when the two franchises were locked in a fierce auction battle that saw KKR secure him for a staggering Rs 23.75 crore.

Venkatesh Iyer has strong leadership qualities. That is great to have in the dressing room and on the field. We are happy to get him and I look forward to working with him. When you plan well and have a good strategy, you know your limits.

I think KKR had a little extra money left in their purse after purchasing Cameron Green. They were probably betting some of it on Venkatesh Iyer because they had some money left, but in the end, we ended up acquiring Venkatesh and we are really happy with it, Flower said on JioStar.

Former India cricketer Anil Kumble detailed RCB's key acquisitions and said, RCB thought they might get outbid, but they did not, so they are happy to have Venkatesh Iyer. Jacob Duffy will be a backup for Josh Hazlewood, and Jordan Cox is a like-for-like replacement for Phil Salt. Mangesh Yadav comes in as a backup for Yash Dayal. He is a left-arm seamer with a lot of potential, though he has not played much cricket.

On RCB's careful strategy to maintain stability within their squad after the auction, Kumble said, Venkatesh Iyer will not be in the playing eleven at the start. You do not want to create doubt in a winning team. That is probably why they did not go after a Ravi Bishnoi, so that Suyash Sharma does not feel threatened by a senior India spinner.

T20 TROPHY TOUR

ICC Men's T20 WC 2026 Trophy Tour Concludes Qatar and Oman Legs

NEW DELHI

After captivating fans during its grand launch at Adam's Bridge—culturally revered in India as the Ram Setu—the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 Trophy Tour successfully concluded its journeys through Qatar and Oman, leaving behind a trail of excitement, cultural exchange, and grassroots engagement.

In Qatar, the trophy made a striking arrival at the Doha Corniche aboard a traditional dhow, framed by the city's modern skyline. The symbolic entry reflected Qatar's deep-rooted maritime heritage alongside its growing stature as a global sporting destination. Over the course of its journey, the trophy visited some of the nation's most iconic locations, including Sealine Beach, Aspire Zone, Katara Cultural Village, Souq Waqif, and Lusail Boulevard. Each stop offered fans a chance to interact with the trophy while showcasing Qatar's unique fusion of tradition and modernity. Community engagement remained central to the tour's mission. Public displays were organised at prominent gathering spaces, attended by national players, embassy representatives, and community leaders, creating inclusive environments for fan interactions, photo opportunities, and on-ground activations. The tour also placed strong emphasis on youth outreach, visiting educational institutions such as Birla Public School, UDST University, and Qatar Foundation, where thousands of students were introduced to the spirit and values of cricket. Special sessions at Qatar Foundation highlighted inclusion through sport, featuring meaningful interactions with children with autism.

Acknowledging the contribution of migrant communities, a dedicated activation was hosted at Asian Town, celebrating the South Asian diaspora's enduring passion for cricket. The Qatar leg concluded with a visually striking sunset display in the desert, marking a fitting end to a memorable chapter.

BOXING DAY CHAOS

Australia Edge Ahead After 20-Wicket Boxing Day Chaos

MELBOURNE

Australia finished marginally on top at stumps on a chaotic opening day of the fourth Ashes Test as wickets fell in clusters at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground on Friday. In a remarkable day of Test cricket, a staggering 20 wickets fell as Australia closed on four without loss in their second innings, holding a 46-run lead over England.

Nightwatchman Scott Boland remained unbeaten on four alongside Travis Head, who was yet to score, after England were skittled for just 110 in reply to Australia's modest first-innings total of 152. The dramatic collapse marked the highest number of wickets to fall in a single day at the venue since 25 fell during the historic 1902 Ashes Test.

England pacer Josh Tongue was the standout performer early, claiming a career-best 5 for 45 on a green-tinged surface after England captain Ben Stokes won the toss and elected to field in the traditional Boxing Day Test. Australia were dismissed in just 45.2 overs, allowing an early tea interval and raising hopes of a fightback from the tourists.

However, those hopes quickly faded as England's batting crumbled alarmingly. Facing a lively Australian attack, the visitors were bowled out in only 29.5 overs, with their top order offering little resistance. The carnage unfolded in front of a record crowd of 93,442 spectators, surpassing the previous MCG single-day attendance record of 93,013 set during the 2015 World Cup final.

Australia seamer Michael Neser led the charge with the ball, taking 4 for 45, and also top-scored with the bat for Australia with a gritty 35. Despite criticism of the surface from former England captain Michael Vaughan, who labelled the pitch a shocker, Neser defended the conditions, noting that early movement was expected before batting would become easier later in the match.

Mandhana says team embraced World Champions feeling well

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

India vice-captain Smriti Mandhana said the team had embraced the feeling of being crowned world champions, but also pointed out that the tag also brought added responsibility. Last month, India won the 2025 Women's ODI World Cup in Navi Mumbai and got their first-ever ICC trophy in senior women's cricket. It feels amazing, to be honest (on being called world champions). I still remember that moment at the World Cup when our team walked out, and they announced us as champions - it was surreal. It's been about a month now, and as a team we've embraced that feeling really well. But along with the pride, it also brings responsibility. It reminds us to prepare even better and to keep that success going because we'll be known as world champions for the next few years. Hopefully the marketing team doesn't let us forget it either.

City Football Group Exits Mumbai City FC

City Football Group exits Mumbai City FC, ending transformative six-year partnership reshaping the club's success

MUMBAI

City Football Group (CFG) has officially divested its shareholding in Mumbai City FC, returning the Indian Super League side to the full control of its founding owners. The development was confirmed by the club in a statement shared on social media, marking the end of a significant chapter in Indian football.

Mumbai City FC can confirm that City Football Group Limited has divested its shareholding in the Club. The founding owners will assume full control of the organisation moving forward, the statement read. CFG's decision comes at a sensitive juncture for Indian football, with uncertainty surrounding the future of the Indian Super League itself.

CFG explained that the move followed a comprehensive commercial review and was influenced by the ongoing ambiguity around the league's long-term direction. The Manchester City–owning conglomerate added that the decision aligned with its disciplined and strategic approach, ensuring focus on markets where it can generate the greatest sustained impact.

The group's acquisition of a 65 percent stake in Mumbai City FC in November 2019 was widely viewed as a watershed moment for the club. The partnership ushered in a new era of professionalism, global best practices, and data-driven football operations, elevating Mumbai City FC into one of the most successful teams in Indian football during the six-year association.

Since 2019, CFG and Mumbai City FC have reached new heights, winning two ISL League Winners' Shields and two ISL Cup titles, strengthening the Club's football operations, and making meaningful contributions to the growth of the game in India, the statement noted.

CFG's influence was felt almost immediately. The 2020–21 season proved historic, as Mumbai City FC completed an unprecedented double by winning both the League Winners' Shield and the ISL Cup in the same campaign—the first club to achieve the feat. The team further underlined its dominance in the 2022–23 season by securing a second Shield while remaining unbeaten across the entire 18-match league phase, another first in ISL history.

Vaibhav Suryavanshi receives PM Bal Puraskar award

NEW DELHI

President of India Droupadi Murmu on Friday conferred on India's 14-year-old batting prodigy Vaibhav Suryavanshi for his exploits in the field of cricket. The President conferred the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar on children for their exceptional achievements in the fields of Bravery, Social Service, Environment, Sports, Art & Culture and Science & Technology at a ceremony held in the national capital.

The Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar is India's highest civilian honour for individuals aged five to 18, instituted to recognise exceptional achievements across diverse fields like art and culture, innovation, science and technology, social service, sports and instances of bravery.

Speaking on the occasion, the President congratulated the recipients of the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar and said, Vaibhav Suryavanshi has made a name for himself in the highly competitive and talent-filled world of cricket and has set many records.

The teenager is also slated to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi later in the day. Following the ceremony in Delhi, he will rejoin the India Under-19 squad and travel to Zimbabwe for preparations ahead of the Under-19 World Cup, which begins from January 15.

The BCCI also congratulated the youngster for his achievement. Congratulations to our explosive young batter, Vaibhav Suryavanshi, on being conferred the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar by the Honourable President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmuji, it posted on X.

Earlier this week, Suryavanshi smashed 190 off 84 balls against Arunachal Pradesh at the Vijay Hazare Trophy, becoming the youngest centurion in List A history. The knock also broke AB de Villiers' record for the fastest 150 in List A cricket and his 15 sixes in the innings are the most by any Indian in the 50-over format.

Earlier this month, Suryavanshi smashed an unbeaten century for Bihar against Maharashtra in an Elite Group B Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2025 match at Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

Record-Breaking 94,199 Fans Pack MCG on Day One of Boxing Day Test

MELBOURNE

The Melbourne Cricket Ground etched its name deeper into cricketing folklore after recording a staggering attendance of 94,199 spectators on the opening day of the Boxing Day Test. The figure marks the highest crowd ever recorded for a cricket match at the iconic venue, underlining the enduring appeal of Test cricket and the Ashes rivalry.

The historic turnout surpassed the previous MCG record of 93,013, which was set during the 2015 ICC Cricket World Cup Final between Australia and New Zealand. It also established a new benchmark for the highest-attended single day of Test cricket, eclipsing the 91,112 fans who attended Day One of the 2013 Boxing Day Test between Australia and England.

The Melbourne Cricket Ground witnessed history as unprecedented crowds turned Day One of the Boxing Day Test into a record-breaking spectacle

With Days Two and Three already sold out, this year's Boxing Day Test is now threatening the cumulative Ashes attendance record of 271,865, also set in 2013. As Australia currently hold a commanding 3–0 lead in the Ashes series, with one Test remaining in Sydney after the Melbourne clash, interest in the contest has remained exceptionally strong despite the one-sided scoreline.

The MCG's association with Boxing Day Tests dates back to 1950, when Melbourne hosted the inaugural match on December 26. Since then, Cricket Australia has held contractual rights to use the venue until the end of March each summer, even as the ground transitions into Australian Rules football season. Earlier this year, Cricket Australia extended its venue hire agreement with the MCG through to the 2030–31 summer, reaffirming the ground's central role in the nation's sporting calendar.

Looking ahead, the iconic stadium is set to host another landmark occasion in March 2027—a one-off day-night Test between arch-rivals Australia and England to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the first-ever Test match. The fixture will mark the first time Australia's men's team plays a pink-ball Test at the MCG, adding further historical significance.

Suraj Sharma sweeps senior and junior 25m rapid fire pistol titles

NEW DELHI

Madhya Pradesh's Suraj Sharma delivered a golden double, sweeping both the Senior and Junior men's national titles in the 25m Rapid Fire Pistol (RFP) with two composed and authoritative performances in the 68th National Shooting Championship Competitions at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi on Friday. Suraj first stamped his authority in the junior final, closing with 30 hits to secure the gold medal, before returning later to control the senior final and add a second title with 31 hits. Suraj began the senior final in dominant fashion, hitting 19 of his first 20 targets, and went on to close the contest with 31 hits, finishing three clear of defending champion Vijayveer Sidhu of Punjab, who settled for the silver medal with 28 hits. Rajasthan's Bhavesh Shekhawat rounded off the podium, claiming bronze with a total of 24 hits.

Rohit Sharma Falls for Golden Duck as Virat Kohli Shines Again

JAIPUR

Former Indian captain Rohit Sharma endured a dramatic reversal of fortunes as he was dismissed for a golden duck during Mumbai's Vijay Hazare Trophy Elite Group C clash against Uttarakhand on Friday. Rohit was caught at deep fine leg off the final delivery of the first over, falling to right-arm medium pacer Akash Madhwal Bora, with Jagmohan Nagarkoti completing the catch after fumbling initially.

The early dismissal came just days after Rohit had scripted a sensational return to domestic cricket. Playing his first Vijay Hazare Trophy match in seven years for Mumbai, the 38-year-old opener smashed a fluent 62-ball century against Sikkim. He followed that up with a blistering 155 off just 98 deliveries in Mumbai's successful chase, reminding fans of his enduring class and appetite for big scores.

That century was Rohit's 37th in List A cricket, adding to his already imposing record of 33 international hundreds for India. While the golden duck against Uttarakhand was a disappointment, it did little to overshadow the significance of his comeback performances, which have generated widespread attention across Indian domestic cricket.

Elsewhere in the tournament, Virat Kohli continued his impressive run for Delhi in the Elite Group D fixture against Gujarat in Bengaluru. Kohli struck a brisk 77, an innings decorated with 14 boundaries, showcasing sharp timing and control. He added 72 runs for the second wicket with Arpit Rana, followed by partnerships of 24 with Nitish Rana and a brief 10-run stand with Rishabh Pant, before being dismissed by Vishal Jayswal in the 22nd over.

Earlier in the week, during Delhi's match against Andhra Pradesh at the BCCI's Centre of Excellence, Kohli reached a major career milestone by completing 16,000 runs in List A cricket with his very first run of the chase.

Mumbai's Angkrish Raghuvanshi Hospitalised after Head Injury

JAIPUR

Mumbai batter Angkrish Raghuvanshi was rushed to hospital in Jaipur on Friday after suffering a serious head injury during Mumbai's Vijay Hazare Trophy encounter against Uttarakhand, sparking concern among players, officials, and fans. The incident occurred while the 21-year-old was fielding at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium, one of the tournament's prominent venues.

Raghuvanshi was injured while attempting to field the ball and was seen lying on the ground before medical staff rushed to his aid. He was stretchered off the field immediately, with play briefly halted as players from both sides looked on anxiously. According to media reports, the young batter was taken to a nearby medical facility for further evaluation and precautionary scans.

Images and videos of Raghuvanshi being carried off the field quickly circulated on social media, underlining the seriousness of the incident and prompting widespread concern about his well-being. Raghuvanshi, who also represents Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League, has been regarded as one of Mumbai's promising young talents, making the incident particularly worrying for followers of domestic cricket.

AFCON Organisers Allowing Fans In For Free To Fill Empty Stands

MOROCCO

Organisers at the Africa Cup of Nations in Morocco are allowing supporters in for free after kick-off in matches where stadiums are not full, a Confederation of African Football source. The Group F game between Cameroon and Gabon in Agadir kicked off in front of almost empty stands but the ground filled up significantly over the course of the first half despite incessant rain. The official attendance was later announced as 35,200 inside a venue which can hold over 45,000. There have been similar scenes at numerous matches across the opening days of the competition, even leading to confusion over the attendance figures themselves.

The crowd at Tuesday's Group D encounter between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Benin at Rabat's Al Medina Stadium -- which filled up considerably over the course of the game -- was initially announced as 6,703 before later being corrected to 13,073.

The CAF source indicated that organisers, in agreement with African football's governing body, were opening stands around 20 minutes into games to allow fans gathered outside to enter without paying.

Filling stadiums is an important issue for Cup of Nations organisers in Morocco, for which a successful hosting of the tournament is key as it builds towards the 2030 World Cup to be jointly held in the North African country, Spain and Portugal.

CAF's official ticketing platform showed seats available for almost all remaining group matches for prices starting at 100 dirhams ($10.96). The only matches shown as sell-outs were hosts Morocco's games against Mali on Friday and Zambia on Monday, as well as Algeria against Burkina Faso on Sunday and Algeria versus Equatorial Guinea.

SUB-JR MEN HOCKEY:

RITU RANI, OTHERS WIN

SURAT

Ritu Rani Hockey Academy, Roundglass Punjab Hockey Club Academy, Salute Hockey Academy and HAR Hockey Academy registered emphatic victories on day three of the 3rd Hockey India Sub-Junior Men Academy Championship 2025 – Zone A & B at the Veer Narmad South Gujarat University Hockey Ground in Surat on Friday. In Pool D, Ritu Rani Hockey Academy defeated Namdhari XI 3-1, with goals from Sandeep Singh, Krishna and Anmoldeep Singh, while Rajbir Singh scored for Namdhari XI. Pool C saw Roundglass Punjab Hockey Club Academy dominate Cheema Hockey Academy 8-0, as eight different players, led by captain Arshdip Singh, found the net.

HIL 2026 FOCUS

Harmanpreet, Hardik See HIL 2026 as Crucial Launchpad

NEW DELHI

India men's hockey stalwarts Harmanpreet Singh and Hardik Singh have underlined the importance of the Men's Hockey India League (HIL) 2026 as a pivotal platform to build form, confidence, and match sharpness ahead of a demanding international calendar featuring the FIH Pro League, the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026, and the 2026 Asian Games.

India and JSW Soorma Hockey Club captain Harmanpreet Singh believes the timing of the league could not be better for the national squad. Calling Hero HIL 2026 an ideal build-up phase, Harmanpreet said the competition's intensity mirrors international hockey. He emphasised that the expectation within JSW Soorma Hockey Club is to be among the most disciplined and dangerous teams in both attacking and defensive circles, adding that the consistently high standard across franchises ensures every fixture feels like an international contest.

Harmanpreet believes the league also plays a vital role in leadership development and nurturing young talent. As captain at both franchise and national levels, he views HIL as a unique environment where emerging players gain big-match exposure alongside seasoned internationals. He highlighted key areas such as work rate, penalty-corner execution, and defensive organisation, noting that strong habits built during the league can directly translate into improved performances for India later in the year. According to him, the overarching objective is clear: convert a strong HIL season into international success and medals for the country.

Meanwhile, Hardik Singh will anchor the midfield for the HIL Governing Council team, which has taken over operations from the UP Rudras ahead of the 2026 season to ensure continuity for players. Hardik described the upcoming HIL campaign as a massive opportunity, both personally and collectively, stressing that the league's high-pressure environment is ideal preparation before a year packed with major tournaments. Hardik noted that the tactical variety and quality of opposition across franchises ranging from elite drag-flickers to rapid forwards and compact defensive units offer invaluable preparation for international hockey.

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